

STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

WORKING OF THE LAWS

FOR THE

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

THROUGHOUT THE BRITISH COLONIES,

AND ON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

THE NEGRO POPULATION.

*London Anti-Slavery Society  
presented at Parliament  
Slavery - 1840*

THE members of the Anti-Slavery Societies, and the friends and supporters of the Anti-Slavery cause generally, will doubtless readily recal to their recollection the "Memorial of the joint Committees of the London Anti-Slavery Societies," presented in the autumn of last year to his Majesty's principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, on behalf of "the Anti-Slavery and Abolition Societies of the United Kingdom;" copies of which, with an Appendix, substantiating the statements therein contained, having been sent in considerable numbers to every principal town in the empire.

This Memorial, which was communicated to Lord Glenelg by a deputation from the London Anti-Slavery committees, accompanied by delegates from some of the largest towns in the kingdom, and by a considerable number of Members of Parliament, only a short time previous to the close of the late session, concluded thus:—

"Henceforward the attitude of the friends of emancipation must be one of unabated and unceasing vigilance; may they be permitted to hope, it will likewise be one of cordial co-operation in the beneficent designs of government? Their own course is fixed, for they are solemnly pledged to themselves, and to the country, to spare no prudent exertions, and to leave no constitutional means untried, until the last vestiges of slavery shall have merged in perfect and unconditional freedom."

The state of public business at the advanced period of the session above alluded to, rendered it impossible to introduce any

remedial measure into the House of Commons with any chance of success at that time; but the Committee lost not a moment in acting upon the pledge given in the concluding lines of their Memorial, and they immediately prepared a Petition, grounded upon that Memorial, as follows, and it was presented, at their request, by Mr. Buxton, only a few days before Parliament was prorogued.

*"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.*

*"The humble Petition of the undersigned Members of the joint Committee of the London Anti-Slavery Society and of the British and Foreign Society for the Universal Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade,*

SHEWETH,

"That in the year 1833, when your Honourable House passed a bill, entitled, 'An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies, for promoting the industry of the manumitted Slaves, and for compensating the persons hitherto entitled to the services of such Slaves,' your Petitioners were fully and clearly of opinion, that the act, from its being burthened with a clause, enacting that the negro should, for a certain term of years, be apprenticed to his former owner, was a measure neither 'safe nor satisfactory;' and that therefore your Petitioners took every opportunity to protest solemnly against the apprenticeship system, which they believed to be fraught with evils of such magnitude, as to endanger the success of the whole experiment.

"That your Petitioners have since waited with unabated anxiety its gradual development. That one twelvemonth has now elapsed since its introduction into the colonies; a period abundantly sufficient to ascertain its real character, and to exhibit its genuine fruits. That although some of its most malignant consequences have been hitherto arrested by the kindness of an over-ruling Providence, and the singular forbearance of the negro race, enough has been already displayed of its injurious tendency to justify your Petitioners in reiterating their most solemn protest against it; a protest founded, not as formerly, on the strength of untried opinion, but on the result of actual experiment, proving by facts, its extreme injustice, cruelty, and danger as a practical system for the '*promotion of industry and good conduct*' of the negro—the avowed object of the apprenticeship, as distinctly stated in the preamble of the abolition act.

"That on facts admitted by all, your Petitioners are now willing to take their stand; and they confidently appeal to the patient industry and persevering good behaviour of the negro appren-

tices; qualities hitherto exhibited by them in a degree beyond all praise, under a system hard and unjust in any case, but converted into a system of perpetual irritation and personal and mental suffering, by the conduct of those who administer it. Nay, your Petitioners can now confidently appeal to the success of immediate and entire emancipation itself, in the islands of Antigua and Bermuda, for an undeniable proof that the British slaves, as a body, were qualified, as your Petitioners always affirmed them to be, to receive at once the unconditional boon of freedom, and that the proprietors of the soil, indeed all parties, would be greatly benefited by it. Any thing short of this, your Petitioners therefore are bound to consider as a 'partial,' 'imperfect,' and unnecessarily 'protracted measure,' violating the great principle of justice, and productive of unmixed evil.

"That the apprenticeship system, in fact, whether regarded in the light of a needless postponement of acknowledged rights, or more justly as a system of oppression and extortion, tending to the certain results of outrage and abuse while it continues, and to the perpetuation of hatred and distrust whenever it expires, must be pronounced to have signally failed of the legitimate objects proposed for its accomplishment, and consequently, for the sake of all parties, to require an immediate repeal.

"That your Petitioners cannot forget, and they would impress it upon your Honourable House, that the negroes themselves have high and independent claims upon a just and paternal government, which nothing can destroy or suspend:—and of one thing your Petitioners are certain, that until these claims, so munificently redeemed by the British people, have been fully conceded, a growing disgust will be felt through the empire, at those colonial preferences and fiscal arrangements, which serve to perpetuate, if not to aggravate the evils of slavery.

"That your Petitioners, holding the strongest objection to the system of apprenticeship, under any circumstances, have notwithstanding felt bound to examine how far that system, as contemplated by the imperial act, has been fairly and impartially carried into operation; how far the negro has been put in possession of those rights, to which he is now by statute entitled; whether he has obtained that protection for which so large a national sacrifice has been made; how far, in short, the intentions of the imperial legislature and spirit of the abolition act, have been fully carried into effect by the legislatures, the authorities and the planters in the colonies.

"That in the performance of this duty, your Petitioners have instituted a careful and laborious examination of such acts of the colonial legislature (being however three from Jamaica only) as have been placed within the reach of your Petitioners; no others,

not even the Orders in Council for the Crown colonies, having yet been officially communicated.

"That your Petitioners humbly represent to your Honourable House, that the first Jamaica act assumes to adopt, not only the spirit, but the very words of the imperial act, and that in many points there is no doubt the act has been literally copied; but that in many practical respects, in most of those points, in short, where colonial experience was required to give effect to the important principles embodied in the imperial act, your Petitioners conceive it will be found to fall short of the spirit in which the latter was framed.

"That your Petitioners, in laying before your Honourable House the result of their examination, do not deem it necessary to point out, clause by clause, the almost innumerable defects of each, and they will therefore only observe briefly:—

"That the regulations for the purchase by the negro of the remaining term of his apprenticeship, are vague and insufficient.

"That the power placed in the hands of vestries, with regard to the support of aged and infirm negroes, may be cruelly and unjustly exercised.

"That the regulations respecting the mode of appraisement of the value of the negro, are in a high degree arbitrary and unjust.

"That no remedy is provided for the parent, child, or other relative, who by any omission or mistake of the Special Justice shall have been separated from his family!

"That the regulations with respect to food, maintenance, and allowances, are extremely unsatisfactory, and open to great abuse.

"That enormous discretionary powers are unreasonably confided to single Special Magistrates; in some cases, no less than that of dooming to uncompensated servitude, until the age of twenty-one years, every child born of slave parents, not of the age of six years at the commencement of the period of apprenticeship, or born of apprenticed parents any time within it, if adjudged by such magistrate, to be not sufficiently provided for.

"That the apprentice may be compelled to work for the benefit of his employer for a longer period than is necessary to indemnify for the loss of time incurred by the apprentice's absence, extending to three days' labour for half a day's absence.

"That though provision is made to compel the apprentice to indemnify the employer, no provision is made for compelling the master to indemnify the apprentice, for loss arising from any act of his.

"That no provision is made with regard to the hours of consecutive rest, which are in all cases essential to the negro; whereas, as the law now stands, the fifteen hours of extra labour awarded as a penalty, may be so apportioned, as to force the labourer to continue at work for forty-two hours in succession.

"That a single act of inebriety taking place in the apprentice's own time, may be punished by the forfeiture of four days' labour for the advantage of his employer.

"That for the indefinite offence of 'insolence,' thirty-nine stripes may be inflicted.

"That for the careless use of fire, or the mere cutting off a cane-stalk, the negro may be punished by three months' imprisonment, or fifty lashes.

"That a power is given to a single Special Justice to condemn a labourer summarily to six months' hard labour, for any riot on the part of three or more apprentices.

"That for carrying a knife in his pocket, the apprentice may be punished by thirty-nine lashes, and the forfeiture of the 'offensive weapon' to his owner.

"That the enactments relative to the arrest of negroes by estate constables, and the time they may be kept in confinement, are indefinite, and open to great abuse.

"That the negro, for making complaints which may be deemed groundless, may be punished by the forfeiture of *double* the length of time occupied on the occasion of making them.

"That a Special Justice may substitute a longer period of solitary confinement for hard labour, than that awarded by the original judgment.

"That power is given to a single Special Justice to sentence any apprenticed labourer, convicted of 'indolence,' 'neglect,' or 'improper performance of work,' in addition to punishment by flogging, hard labour, or solitary imprisonment, to continue at work for any such number of hours or days, in his or her own time, for the benefit of the person entitled to his or her services, 'as the justice of the case may seem to require,' not exceeding fifteen hours in any one week; so that for an act of 'indolence,' or 'neglect,' or 'improper performance of work,' a single Special Justice may, by possibility, deprive a whole gang of labourers of fifteen hours of their own time in each week, during the whole six years of their apprenticeship, or even beyond that period.

"That this extraordinary enactment, which your Petitioners conceive would have been sufficient alone to warrant the total rejection of the act, has been passed over, even without observation.

"That your Petitioners believe such an unlimited discretion could never have been contemplated; though it is understood, in point of fact, that under this, or similar clauses, punishments have been recommended, if not awarded, within the last year, which are to take effect in 1841.

"That regulations are adopted relative to the removal of apprentices from their provision-grounds, which are both harsh and unjust.

"That the regulations with respect to the provision-grounds, and the substitution of allowances in lieu of them, are indefinite, and liable to great abuse.

"That the enactments relative to the hours of labour are indefinite, and also liable to great abuse, and to the infliction of great hardship on the apprentice.

"That the powers given to the Special Magistrate, as they regard the manager and the apprentice, are unequal and unfair. In the latter case, this power extends to six months' imprisonment, to fifty stripes, to the right of depriving him of fifteen hours' labour in any week during the whole period of the apprenticeship, and also of prolonging that apprenticeship one whole year; whilst his authority over the manager, extends only to a maximum penalty of £5 currency, or five days' imprisonment, which he is not *required*, but merely *empowered* to inflict.

"That the remedy given to the apprentice, of proceeding against his master by action at common law, is nugatory in his hands, as he has not the funds to enable him to do so.

"That the enactments, authorizing the extension of the term of apprenticeship in certain cases, for one whole year, are carelessly worded, and liable to abuse.

"That the assessment of damages are left to a *single* Special Magistrate.

"That the clauses respecting 'works of necessity' are indefinite, and liable to much abuse, and the infliction of great injustice and hardship on the negro.

"That having thus laid before your Honourable House some few only of the numerous defects of the first Jamaica act, your Petitioners cannot refrain from expressing their astonishment, that it should have been pronounced sufficient to warrant the declaration, by an Order in Council, that the rights of Jamaica to the indemnity provided by Parliament has been rendered 'indefeasible.'

"That your Petitioners feel the deepest pain, though but little surprise, at the instances of cruelty and abuse already made known to his Majesty's ministers, and which are daily pouring in upon your petitioners, with a rapidity certainly never exceeded, even in the worst days of slavery; and they furnish sufficient proof, that their fears of the ill-working of the apprenticeship system, are but too well founded.

"That your Petitioners feel it scarcely necessary to do more than to call attention to the second Jamaica act (commonly called the amending act).

"That your Petitioners, however, cannot but allude to one clause (section 13) as too remarkable to be overlooked. It enacts, 'that it shall and may be lawful for any Special Justice to substitute any given number of hours of work on the treadmill, for any of the punishments imposed by this or any other

act on apprenticed labourers, as he in his discretion shall consider necessary and proper.'

"That the third act, which was passed in December, 1834, having been disallowed by his Majesty, it is only important to refer to some of its leading provisions, for the purpose of exhibiting the real animus of the Jamaica legislature, notwithstanding their pretences to liberal legislation.

"That the main object of this act appears to be, to render the methods of compulsory manumission, already in a great degree neutralized, absolutely impossible; to deprive the negro of the scanty provisions and protection allowed him by the two preceding acts; to reintroduce the old system of irresponsible punishment by means of quarter sessions jurisdiction, appeals to the superior courts, and the establishment of penal gangs and other modes of punishment on estates; to still further vex, irritate, and oppress the negroes by unwarrantable punishments, interference with conjugal and parental intercourse, suspension of friendly meetings and amusements, and a wanton destruction of the negroes' property; and, last of all, to reintroduce the outrageous and disgusting practice of flogging females, even though restricted to female children under the age of ten years.

"That such are some of the enactments of this most objectionable statute, which, not content with drawing a distinction in spirit, proceeded likewise to draw the same distinction in words between 'free persons,' and that new species of bondage, which is so undisguisably re-enacted; and be it observed, that though the second act, which is to a certain extent remedial, was *temporary*, this act was made *permanent*, and was sanctioned by the Governor, which gives it operation until the disallowal shall have reached Jamaica.

"That your Petitioners humbly represent to your Honourable House, that this is matter of most serious concern, and lengthened argument is scarcely requisite to prove, that nearly every one of its enactments is directly opposed to the spirit and letter of the British act, and therefore it is legally null and void, *ab initio*; but having been sanctioned by the governor, of what avail is this total and absolute illegality to those who for months will have suffered under it? Yet a remedy they must have, and such a remedy as they can employ, or the solemn provisions of their charter may be set at nought at the pleasure of the colonial legislatures.

"That your Petitioners now beg to call attention to a circumstance, which may have had a tendency greatly to increase the present painful state of things. Years ago, it was deliberately admitted on all sides, that ameliorative measures could only be carried into execution through the medium of functionaries

unconnected with colonial interests; and surely, if ever there was a time when this principle of government should have been inflexibly adhered to, it was during the continuance of the apprenticeship scheme, and yet at the present moment, in most of the principal colonies, have functionaries been appointed to high stations, contrary to the rule thus openly established.

"That your Petitioners believe the main intention of the imperial act was, to bestow an immediate share of substantial freedom on the negro, and to create only such restrictions as were essential to the safe working of the apprenticeship system.

"That your Petitioners, and the public, were little prepared for that series of arbitrary and vexatious enactments which the colonial legislatures have employed for this purpose, and still less for that incautious sanction of them, given by the government.

"That it is easy to gather from them, that the interests of the planter were to be secured at any expense, while those of the negro were quite a secondary consideration. Whatever relates to coercion or punishment, is concocted with care, and stretched to its utmost latitude, whilst every enactment that regards the protection and happiness of the negro, nay, even his very necessities, is vaguely expressed, and stinted to its scantiest limits. Even the means of self-redemption from this unhappy condition, are rendered nugatory by checks upon private labour, and by all but insurmountable obstacles to compulsory manumission; while the withdrawal in many cases of even the accustomed 'allowances' of slavery, and the extraordinary accumulation of discretionary restraints and punishments, are sufficient to create an amount of privation and hardship, equal at least to that, which was ordinarily endured under the old system.

"That your Petitioners in proof of these statements refer to the innumerable instances of cruelty reported to government, and also to your Petitioners, on respectable authority, from which it is clear, that the legalized punishment by flogging (and the cart-whip may still be employed) is in Jamaica much more frequent than under the slave system; and unquestionable reports have reached your Petitioners, that the imprisonment of negroes by their masters, in cells of the most loathsome and abominable description, is practised on a very extensive scale.

"That your Petitioners, therefore, cannot but apprehend it to be possible, that the proverbial patience of the negro may at length give way under such continued provocation, and that the tranquillity of the colonies may be yet unfortunately disturbed.

"That your Petitioners must therefore freely confess, that in no part of these transactions, can they find any thing like that *bona fides* on which, so far as they understand the imperial act, the approval of his Majesty's ministers was made to depend.



"That the character of the colonial acts already commented on, the almost contemporaneous protest of the colonial legislature against their own acts of legislation, the audacious infringements of the third Jamaica act, not to dwell upon the still worse administration of very bad laws, furnish so many proofs to the apprehension of your Petitioners of the prematurity of that Order in Council, which has gone far to deprive the mother country of their chief security for the success of a measure, which cost the enormous price of twenty millions sterling.

"That your Petitioners represent to your Honourable House, as the fullest justification for the presentation of this their Petition, that the fairest trial has been given to the new system, and the fullest opportunity afforded, of convincing the world that your Petitioners have not formed a wrong estimate of the incurable aversion of the planters to all safe and satisfactory methods of improving the condition of their bondsmen, and how difficult it is, if not impossible, after all, to restrain the present race of managers and agents, accustomed as they have been to the abuse of place, and vitiated by long indulgence, within the bounds of endurance, and that the easier and safer mode would be, at once to terminate these difficulties, by the final extinction of that system which generated them.

"That to this consummation, therefore, your Petitioners feel bound to direct their efforts, under the settled conviction of its necessity, whether considered with reference to the interests of the planter or the apprentice, or to the honour and prosperity of the country.

"That under the deep conviction of the truth of these views, your Petitioners feel it to be their imperative duty again to approach your Honourable House with their most urgent entreaties, that your Honourable House will proceed at the earliest possible opportunity, to abolish the system of apprenticeship, and to grant unconditional freedom, without distinction of colour, to the inhabitants of all the colonies belonging to the British crown."

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In accordance with the sentiments expressed in this Petition, Mr. Buxton gave notice, that at an early period in the next session, he should bring forward measures with a view to the extinction of the system of apprenticeship in all the British colonies.

Thus stood the question with regard to the great cause of negro emancipation, at the close of the last session of Parliament.

Since that period, certain official documents have been printed under the title of "Papers relative to the Abolition of Slavery," Part II. (No. 278.) Two points are proved by these documents

beyond all doubt:—1st, that the labours of the Anti-slavery Committees, and the energetic support they received from their friends throughout the country, during the last session of Parliament, were of the most essential service to the cause of the negro; 2nd, that the negroes generally, have conducted themselves with the greatest propriety and forbearance, under the most irritating and trying circumstances.

It is unnecessary at present to analyze these papers, as that will be fully done in a forthcoming number of "The Anti-Slavery Reporter." The Committee, however, feel it to be no more than an act of duty to their Subscribers and Supporters, to inform them, that these Papers contain sufficient evidence to shew, that the representations made by the Committee to the Home Government have met with favourable attention. The third Jamaica act, alluded to in the Petition before recited, has most properly been disallowed. The Barbadoes and other acts have been likewise disallowed; and orders have also been despatched to the Colonial Governors, of a favourable nature for the general improvement of the laws respecting the negro population.

Another important point has likewise been gained from the increased activity of Government, in the recal of the special commissions, so liberally bestowed on the planters, or on their representatives, by which these interested persons obtained concurrent jurisdiction with the Stipendiary Magistrates, sent out expressly from this country to administer with impartiality the abolition laws, and to guard the rights of the negroes.

In reference to the Mauritius, it may also be stated, that the labours of the Anti-slavery Committees were not in vain. On the 5th of August, a few days before the then impending motion on the state of that colony was to have been brought under the attention of the House of Commons, Lord Glenelg sent off a despatch to Sir William Nicolay, the Governor, which, if acted on by the local authorities in good faith, will secure the entire freedom of nearly the whole of the apprentices in that important possession of the British crown. The Committee, however, cannot disguise from their friends, their apprehensions, that without a pure and efficient administration of justice in that colony, no measures recommended by the Home Government will ever be carried into effect.

With respect to the second point,—viz., the conduct of the negroes:—their orderly, peaceful, and industrious behaviour is amply verified by these documents. The great problem has now been solved, for it has been found, that the negroes will work cheerfully and perseveringly for hire,—in fact that they require only the common inducements to labour, to compete with the most industrious peasantry in the world.

These papers are however, defective on several points of great interest and importance necessary to be known, in order to form a just estimate of their present actual condition, and which we can only supply at the present moment, from our private colonial correspondence.

Since the close of the last session of Parliament, the Committee have not ceased to give their serious attention to the consideration of the most judicious and efficient means, by which the present and future welfare of the negro may be secured, and which involve, they feel sure, not only the incorrigible evils of the apprenticeship system, but the introduction of wise enactments suited to the condition of the negroes, when they shall have become absolutely free. The papers above referred to, satisfactory as they are in some particulars, contain nothing, which can induce the Committee for one moment to hesitate in following up the course thus resolved upon, and indeed naturally prompted by a firm conviction of the justice of such sentiments, that determination is strengthened by the present state of the colonial laws and practice, which they disclose; and the absolute necessity of still greater exertion, is demonstrated by the information which continues to pour in upon the Committee from the colonies. It would swell this pamphlet to an inconvenient size, were it attempted to print one tithe of that information. The Committee, therefore, will make only a few extracts from it, premising, that the whole tendency of the voluminous communications, both official and private, documentary and oral, which they have received, bears the same character, and proves,—

1st, That the Colonial Assemblies are but too generally endeavouring, by the adoption of cruel and oppressive laws, under the names of Vagrancy and Police acts, acts for the regulation of gaols and hospitals, and various other enactments for the internal government of the colonies, to fritter away the liberty of the negroes, and to re-establish in its place, most of the abuses of slavery.

2ndly, That the most shameful and cruel acts towards the negroes, are still perpetrated by individuals with impunity.

3rdly, That, to a melancholy and alarming extent, the Magistrates specially appointed to administer the abolition act, have shown, that their sympathies are with the planters, and that many have become mere dependents upon them, and have acted, as though they were appointed for no other purpose, than that of giving, without inquiry or examination, a legal sanction to punishments demanded by the master; and,

4thly, That the conduct of the negroes has been so orderly, peaceful, and industrious, as to entitle them to the highest praise, and to the continued care and protection of all those who formerly exerted themselves to procure their freedom, and whose imperative duty indeed, it has thus become, not only to defend

their unhappy clients against the abuses of the new system, but vigilantly to counteract those influences, which may endanger their future and permanent welfare.

The following observations and extracts, are given in support of the preceding statements :—

## I. OBSERVATIONS ON THE STATE OF COLONIAL LEGISLATION.

It is perhaps unnecessary at present to say much more on this subject, than to refer to the Analysis of the Jamaica acts, professedly passed for carrying the Imperial act for the Abolition of Slavery into effect, which was printed and circulated by the Committee last autumn; but it is impossible to pass by the Vagrancy Act of Jamaica, which has since been printed in the Parliamentary Papers, without making a few observations upon it.

The importance of this subject to the future welfare of the negroes, may justify a few general remarks, as an accompaniment to the analysis already prepared of the Jamaica Vagrant act. Vagrancy laws are legitimately intended for the *maintenance of order* among the lower classes, for the *increase of productive labour*, and for the *protection of particular localities* liable to the support of the indigent. The first of these objects, is in all communities of the greatest consequence; the two latter depend for their importance on the peculiar circumstances of every community. A thickly inhabited country, for instance, with a superabundant peasantry, and local burthens liable to be indefinitely increased by vagrancy, with few unreclaimed lands, and no means of subsistence, except regular labour, with a public opinion at the same time, amply sufficient to restrain the extraordinary abuses of discretionary power, creates a very different necessity for the existence of a vagrant law, and justifies a very different system of control, from a country in which the circumstances alluded to are either wholly diverse, or exist only in a minor degree. The same observation applies to different periods in the history of the same community, and hence the changes which from time to time have been made by our own legislature on this subject. Thus the 3 Geo. III. c. 40, amends the preceding vagrant acts, and the 5 Geo. III. c. 83, repeals them, and entirely remodels the vagrant law. The condition and policy of this country differ in all the particulars above mentioned from those of Jamaica, as the present circumstances of that colony differ likewise from those of any preceding period. A vagrant law therefore, suited to the actual condition of England, or to the past condition of Jamaica, offers no correct model of present legislation for that colony. Now the Jamaica legislators appear to have overlooked this principle, or if they have regarded it, it has only been to mistake the peculiarities of

their own condition, and thus to legislate more mischievously. The Jamaica act, in truth, consists chiefly of a selection, very artfully prepared, of the most stringent provisions of our own existing and repealed vagrant acts; the protective character of which, is however completely destroyed, by the omission of many of the most important *qualifications* and *exceptions*, and by the introduction of *new provisions*, greatly enlarging the power of the Magistrate, and proportionally diminishing the personal freedom of the negro. The circumstances under which the act was passed, and the character of the legislators, explain, but do not justify the nature of their enactments. The Jamaica vagrant act immediately succeeds a system of slavery, and is the production of minds long inured to the vices of that system. It proposes to establish a legal and permanent system of restraint, for one which was lawless in its nature, and uncertain in its duration. It might be expected therefore, to exhibit, as it undoubtedly does, an utter distrust of the negro race, and an inveterate clinging to inordinate power; but it should have been remembered, that this distrust is mutual, and that undue authority established by law, becomes doubly intolerable. Under pretext of a general law, the negroes are still manifestly the objects of peculiar coercion, for the number of European labourers in the colony was much too inconsiderable to be contemplated in such provisions, and the Magistrates possess an express power of remitting the punishment in favour of whomsoever they please.

It is impossible not to perceive, even on the most cursory perusal, that the necessary consequence, if not the intended effect of this statute, is at variance with the legitimate objects of the vagrant law. It is neither calculated to *secure social order*, nor to *promote free labour*, nor even to *relieve local burdens*; but under colour of all these, it is manifestly calculated to establish an oppression closely resembling that, for which it has been substituted. It may be considered, virtually, to amount to an imprisonment of the negroes in their respective parishes, with the perpetual privation of arms, and even of such necessary implements as may be drawn within the meaning of "offensive weapons;" the use of which, and even of the freeman's right of locomotion, are made to depend wholly on the arbitrary construction of a Magistrate. By the restrictions put upon migration, the *time*, *industry*, and *talents* of the negroes are virtually placed at the disposal of the territorial proprietor, upon whom the negroes are thus rendered absolutely dependent for their very subsistence. And by the erection of an inquisitorial surveillance over the minutest *movements*, *circumstances*, and *conduct* of the negroes, accompanied with the power of *examining upon oath* the party accused, as to the *matter of accusation*, and or

inflicting loss of *property* and of *personal liberty*, with *corporal punishment*, at *discretion*, a magisterial despotism is established, which, if permitted to continue, may leave the friends of slavery little to regret at its extinction. That such a law should have been permitted to pass, by the late governor of Jamaica, can only be explained by its colourable resemblance to the English statutes, and by the absence of that precaution, which should have maturely weighed its various details. It will not indeed be questioned, that great difficulties exist in the framing of laws adapted to a state of transition from slavery to freedom; nor, perhaps, that some unusual restraints upon the liberty of the new-made freeman, if entrusted to proper hands, might be temporarily advisable; but no disinterested person can pretend to justify the investment of those individuals, whose abuse of lawless power made its abolition imperative, with a legal and a *permanent* authority over their former bondsmen, differing little, except in name, from the system for which it is substituted. The friends of emancipation, after having consented to pay so costly a price for the *absolute* freedom of the slaves, will not consider the compact completed by their being converted into mere "serfs," and left dependent, as before, on the discretion of their taskmasters, for all that can make life or liberty valuable. From such a specimen of colonial legislation as this act exhibits, they will naturally conclude, that the abolition of an avowed system of slavery, is but the commencement of their work, and that the more important part remains to be accomplished, in securing to the negroes, by wise and just enactments, permanently administered by impartial and responsible functionaries, the substance of that liberty, which has been so dearly purchased.

The case of the Mauritius, is still more flagrant than that of Jamaica: recent intelligence from the former colony proves, that there, the imperial act is intended to be a dead letter, except in so far as it can be made to cover the past criminal acts of the Mauritians in reference to illicit slave-trading, and the illegal registration of slaves. Mr. Chief Justice Blackburne, in a late judgment solemnly delivered on an apprentice, who it could be proved had been illegally held as a slave, and whose freedom was sought to be obtained under the consolidated slave law act, by the Commissioner of his Majesty's customs there, stated, that the imperial abolition act irrevocably fixed the condition of all negroes held as slaves by the Mauritians up to the 1st February, 1835; and that therefore, the party whose freedom it was sought to obtain, could not escheat to the crown, but must continue an apprentice to the individual claiming him as such, until the period specified by Act of Parliament should determine it!! This monstrous decision would, were it possible for it to stand, make the slavery abolition act, the instrument of taking away the liberty of

immense numbers of negroes, who never ought to have been held in bondage, and a cover for all the atrocities, which have been practised in that colony.

In keeping with this decision, we find the local Commissioners of Compensation have prosecuted Mr. Mylius, the registrar of slaves for that colony, on account of his having refused to give certificates of the *due* registration of their slaves to the planters, in those cases in which it clearly appeared that British law had been violated, or in which the terms of the registration act had not been complied with. Mr. Mylius has been convicted and fined!! and the certificates, it is believed, are now given without note or comment by that important public functionary!!!

But this is not all: in the official Gazette of the 15th August last, there appeared an extract from the minutes of the legislative council of the Mauritius, stating, that the drafts of two ordinances, which had been submitted to that board, (a proceeding which could not have taken place without the governor's direct sanction and approbation,) were ordered to be promulgated for general information. The first of these ordinances contains regulations for the government of domestics, and of all persons employed in service by the year, the month, the week, or the day; and the second, relates to agricultural labourers. By section 1 of the former ordinance, it is provided, that every individual, of either sex, employed for hire in domestic duties of any kind, *even by the day*, shall be entered at the police office in each district throughout the colony, on penalty of a summary imprisonment of from eight days to three months.

That every person so inscribed, is to provide himself with a passport, setting forth his name, surname, birth, description of person, profession, the name of his employer, and whether married or single, and the name of his mother.

By sect. 2, masters of apprentices, are to observe the same formality for the apprentices whom they mean to hire out, under a penalty of, not exceeding £5, for the master, and *one month's imprisonment for the apprentice*.

By sect. 3, no person may receive a domestic, who does not produce a passport, which passport is to remain with the master who hires the domestic, under a penalty not exceeding £10 sterling.

Sect. 4 provides, that when a domestic leaves a master, he shall send back this passport to the commissary of police of the quarter, having first inserted thereon, *the time and the cause* of leaving.

Sect. 5 enacts, that no one shall hire any person, after dismissal from his former master, until his passport shall have been inspected by the police.

From these inquisitorial regulations, it appears, that any free

labourer who may help his neighbour to *one* single day's service of any kind, without being first entered at the police-office, is liable to three months' imprisonment!! That if the master of any apprentice does not fulfil the formality required, the innocent apprentice, who is not allowed to do it for him, is to suffer *one month's imprisonment*!! That the passport obtained from the police office, becomes the unfortunate servant's *sole* title to employment. That as soon as he enters any man's service, he is bound to deliver up to him such passport, and by that act to place himself completely in his power. That the master, by paying a trifling fine, can detain such passport, and keep the unfortunate servant out of employment; or should he choose to give it up to the police, he must endorse *the cause* of the servant's leaving him. Here, then, is the free labourer again at his tyrant's mercy. A wicked man, or a weak man, in a fit of passion, may endorse *any* offence on the passport, and the most respectable domestic's character be thus blasted for ever! Nor does any one section of this ordinance afford him a shadow of redress. If this be not slavery, what is? It is slavery on an extended scale, comprising not only the apprentices, but every free labourer in the colony of Mauritius!

Such is the system itself; and then comes a clause of the most atrocious description. The free labourer, as well as the apprentice, is, by the first five sections, placed within the power of his employer and the police. He may be honest, faithful, upright, industrious. He may, however, displease his master or mistress, or their favourites, or they may be capricious. They may refuse a passport; or endorse a fancied charge, or the policeman, often a discharged drunken seaman, may invent it for them. The domestic may be a respectable female, who will not yield to improper solicitations, and, as a consequence be discharged, with some offence, of which she is entirely innocent, endorsed on her passport. Before the truth can be ascertained, she may happen to be one month out of place. Then comes the atrocious regulation of sect. 6, namely:—"Every servant out of place for upwards of one month, (except an apprentice,) and who does not prove, that he or she has the means of subsistence, shall be bound to quit the colony, unless they receive an authorization to remain, on pain of being arrested and punished as vagabonds." Here, then, is a specimen of Mauritius freedom! Every free labourer in that colony is liable to perpetual banishment, to be torn from home, family, and friends--the husband separated from the wife, the mother from the child, because he or she has not yielded, it may be, to the mere caprice of their employers! There is, however, a curious exception in the clause; apprentices, are not to be banished. Why not? Because the interests of their master would suffer by such an arrangement. This is



their master would suffer by such an arrangement. This is the *sole* cause why the slave-apprentice is better off than the free labourer.

By the 10th section of this ordinance, an apprentice cannot hire himself out *on his own account, even with his master's full consent*, without having first obtained the sanction of the special magistrate and police officer, under a penalty of imprisonment or flogging, or both, and a pecuniary fine on his master!

The second ordinance, authorizes the Governor of Mauritius to grant licenses to planters to import labourers from Mozambique, Madagascar, the African coast, and elsewhere, into the colony; in other words, to recommence, and continue the slave-trade, under new forms and a new name; and it then proceeds to establish regulations for the management of the negroes so imported, and of all *free* labourers in the colony, whom it places under the "*immediate surveillance*" of civil commissioners (themselves planters). These two ordinances taken in connexion, form as complete a system of domestic and prædial slavery as human ingenuity could well contrive. It is reported, that upwards of one thousand Africans have already been torn from their homes, to labour in the Mauritian sugar plantations, under the name of *free labourers*, but in fact, subject to all the horrors of slavery!!!—*Is this to be permitted by the British nation?*

## II. EXTRACTS, SHOWING THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE CRUELITIES AND HARDSHIPS INFLICTED UPON NEGRO APPRENTICES IN THE BRITISH COLONIES.

### JAMAICA.

1. *Copy of an Affidavit by Charles Atherton, sworn before John Kelly, Esq., Magistrate, on the 29th June last, as to the fact, that women are cruelly flogged on the tread-mill.*

*Jamaica Sessions.*—Charles Atherton being sworn, maketh oath and saith, that he was present during the time the tread-mill in this town was working on Saturday evening, the 27th of June, and that he saw two drivers flog a woman who was working on the wheel, *about her head, and across her waist*, one driver being on the mill-steps, and the other on the ground, *and both flogging the woman at the same time.*

That during this time, Mr. Sloly, the supervisor, was present, and that when he, Charles Atherton spoke, Mr. Sloly ordered him away, and that on his refusing to go, Mr. Sloly said, that the mill would soon be walled in, and that then he would keep all from coming to see it.

## 2. CASE OF JANE RODERICK.

*Extract from the Diary of Mr. R. Cocking, a Special Magistrate.*

*Barrett Hall Estate, July 3, 1835.*

Visited the hospital in company with Mr. Cleghorn, a local Magistrate, and a respectable inhabitant, a Mr. Murray. We witnessed the following scene. In one room, we found a poor woman (named Jane Roderick) in the last stage of dropsy, and almost in a state of insensibility, lying in a miserable condition, literally embedded in her own excrement, and the floor under her, completely saturated with urine, the exhalation from which defied the efforts of the strongest olfactory organs to remain longer than a few moments in such a beastly place. It appears that the hospital door has been kept constantly locked, and the least possible assistance, that might have been rendered to this unfortunate woman, has been refused by the manager (a Mr. George Parsons), and even the urgent entreaties of the daughter, named Amelia Barnett, a very sickly-looking woman, to be allowed to attend upon her miserable parent, met with no better success!!!

This man evinced the most callous and brutal indifference during the inspection of this horrid scene, both in his remarks and conduct, and merely said in extenuation, that "Dr. Doman had ordered the hospital door to be kept constantly locked." I refrained from awarding the penalty the Abolition Act enjoins, as it would have been the means of this person's escaping that punishment a higher tribunal will award, and which common humanity and justice demands. In the interim, should the poor woman die, I have directed the coroner to hold an inquest.

July 13th. Went to Barrett Hall estate, to attend an inquest on Jane Roderick; had the body disinterred, and an inquest held. Verdict of the jury—"That the said Jane Roderick died on Monday, the twelfth day of the present month and year, in the hospital of the said estate, and that she died from protracted dropsy of the abdomen; but that her life might have been prolonged, but for the culpable neglect, and unfeeling conduct, evinced towards her by the overseer on the said estate, Mr. George Parsons."

3. CASE OF JANE REID.—*Jamaica Sessions.*

Jane Reid, an apprentice to Wakefield estate, in the parish of Trelawney and county of Cornwall, being duly sworn, maketh oath and saith, that on leaving her work on Monday evening, the 22nd of June, she felt ill, and went into the hot house on Tuesday morning; and that on the same day, before she had

seen any doctor, the overseer, Mr. Paul Peterson, ordered her into the dungeon, where she remained without any thing to eat, until about nine o'clock the next morning. And this deponent further saith, that on Tuesday morning, she was taken before Mr. Pryce, the Special Magistrate, who without asking her any questions, ordered her to be worked on the treadmill in Falmouth, and in the penal gang, for four days.

And this deponent further saith, that on the way to the treadmill, she met Dr. Elicott, the doctor of the estate, who after looking at her tongue, said that she was sick, and that if he had been on the estate, he would have prevented the punishment, but as it is passed, he cannot help it.

And this deponent further saith, that on the same Thursday evening, she was tied on the treadmill with both her wrists (with an iron collar round her neck, and a chain round her waist), by one of the drivers at the workhouse, (whom this deponent believes is named George Pew,) by order of Mr. Sloly.

And this deponent further saith, that being very ill, when the wheel turned round, she fell off, and hung by her wrists on the wheel, which bruised her leg, and made it bleed. And this deponent further saith, that while she was hanging on the wheel, she heard Mr. Sloly order George Pew to flog her with the cat, saying, he did not care if she fell dead before him.

And this deponent further saith, that the said George Pew did flog her on her back and shoulders till they bled much, when he, the said George Pew, took wet ashes and rubbed into her back.

And this deponent further saith, that on Friday morning she was again put on the wheel, though very ill, and tied and flogged as before mentioned.

JANE REID, her mark (X).

Sworn before me, this 6th day of July, 1835.

JOHN KELLY.

4. *Substance of an Affidavit taken at Malvern, Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth.\**

Ruth Ann Reed appeared and was sworn before me, in the presence of James Miller Esq., senior Magistrate of the above-named parish. She deposed, that she belonged to ———, of ———, in the Burnt Savanna district, St. Elizabeth, and that the negro apprentices, about twelve in number, had received neither clothing, nor allowance of herrings, nor salt, nor

\* It will be observed that this case occurred about a fortnight before the Act for the Abolition of Slavery came into operation; but as it is still pending, it is introduced here for the purpose of showing the disposition which actuates too many of those who still exercise the rights of ownership.

any thing in lieu thereof; neither had they received medicines or medical attendance, from or by direction of their mistress, for several years. On Monday, in the second week in July, 1834, her mistress gave her to one Mr. ———, a seafaring man, to be flogged, the reason assigned for which was, that she had absented herself from her mistress's property on the Saturday and Sunday preceding. On her return on the Monday to her work, she was seized and forcibly dragged by the above Mr. ——— to a fustic tree, and fastened there with a rope. He then flogged her with a cat over the posteriors until the blood ran down her person. After having treated her thus barbarously, he released her, and subsequently threw the cat at her, stained with her blood, which he ordered her to suck off the tails and swallow it, under the threat, that if she did not, he would flog her again. Through extreme terror she did so, her mistress all this time being actually present, with a young child in her arms. The poor victim was then confined in the bilboes during the night, by her mistress's order, and taken out to work during the day, being confined again at night as before. When released on the Wednesday morning, and ordered to work, she could perform but little labour on account of the pain she suffered from her lacerations, and through consequent fever. She then quitted her mistress's property, until, being partially recovered from the injuries she had sustained, and feeling compelled to reappear, she found her way to Mr. Miller, the senior Magistrate, and solicited from him a paper, recommending her for pardon to her mistress; when that gentleman, with a view to her protection, humanely directed her to apply to me, as Special Magistrate for the parish.

I may not forbear to add to the above statement, the distressing fact, that the wretched creature, whose case I have detailed, was with child at the time the punishment was inflicted. She was delivered in the latter part of December, or early in January following.

Ruth Ann Reed continued on the property of ———, and was there, when I left Jamaica, in April, 1835.

The parties have at length been proceeded against by indictment at the March assizes for the county of Cornwall. True bills have been found; they have traversed until the next assize: however, from the removal of some of the witnesses, and the disposition of Cornwall juries, but little hope seems to offer of a verdict in favour of the poor sufferer.

5. *Notes from Examinations and Cases brought before a Magistrate at Content Hall Pen, August 21st, 1834.*

I visited the above property on the day particularized, in consequence of a requisition from the proprietor, Mr. ———, and complaints on the part of his apprentice Sarah Williams, who

represented to me, in presence of her master, and of all the apprentices attached to the pen, that her mother, Tabitha Hewitt, was then lying in the negro houses very ill, and that she must soon die, as her master would not allow her any medicine, medical attendance, or nourishment whatever. (It was subsequently proved on oath, that the poor creature had actually been left without assistance, to lie from time to time in her own fœces, so great was her exhaustion, until her daughter could return to her from the field, notwithstanding the latter had urgently and repeatedly offered to repay to her master every moment of the time she asked for, to enable her to attend her mother in her deplorable state.) The mother indeed, was at this time at the last extremity; and, in fact, while the complainant stood in tears before me, a cry from the negro houses announced the woman's death. I immediately repaired to the spot, and became convinced that she had literally perished through absolute neglect.

In going to visit the corpse, several of the apprentices complained to me of the want of medicine, medical attendance, and proper care. Amongst them was a young woman named Susan Johnson, who was sorely afflicted with a disease called the *yaws*, and who stated, that she was frequently driven off the property by her master to the river-side, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, without hut or shelter of any kind to cover her, without attendance, medicine, or even common food. At the same time a female apprentice, solicited permission of Mr. —, in my presence, to be allowed to attend upon and seek to cure the wretched girl, engaging to repay to her master, every hour in which she might be so employed. I state only the plain fact, in saying, that this pitiable request was in the most brutal manner refused. I examined and found the young woman in the utmost need of medical care; and it was evident, that, from her master, there was none to be expected.

I had now similar complaints made to me of want of medical aid, and the clothing which had been long due to the major number of the apprentices. I reported these cases to the Governor, and took such steps as I deemed incumbent upon me, to obtain for the complainants the protection of the law; and the result was, that Mr. — was found guilty at a special Sessions consisting of three justices of the peace, who were planters, but some supposed grounds were found, for ordering a further investigation by a court of protection into the particulars of the case alleged. This court was called: when it was assembled, the local Magistrates declared themselves incompetent to try Mr. —. I protested against their proceedings; I made my due report, and pointed out clauses of the law under which Mr. — was amenable; but it was of no avail, and the court was then dissolved. I made my due report in the proper quarter,

and subsequently, Mr. — was brought before a bench of Special Magistrates, on the 26th September last, composed of the Worshipful Thomas Colebrooke and myself, when after a patient trial at Southampton Pen, he was found guilty, and sentenced accordingly. During the trial, Mr. — grossly insulted and otherwise obstructed me in the execution of my duty, and in the presence of his apprentices, openly set my authority and the order of the court at defiance. He refused to give his apprentices their clothing until the end of the year. The law says, the apprentices shall be supplied with their allotted clothing once in every year: Mr. — takes advantage of the non-mention of *twelve calendar months*, and considers that he complies with the letter of the law if he issues clothing in January 1833, and then again in December 1834; and declared his determination to work them upon the *eight hours system*, by which (vide clause 47) they are deprived of the time intended by the British act for the cultivation of their own grounds: in this determination, as well as in defiance of any authority, he was joined by his friend Mr. —, a Magistrate of the parish of St. Elizabeth. Mr. —, through his attorney, moved his Excellency the Governor for a new trial, upon an unfounded plea of some informality, which, after some representations, was granted him, notwithstanding his Majesty's Attorney-General had given his opinion, that in every case, our conduct and decision had been right. The result of this further proceeding before two other Special Magistrates, Messieurs Ramsay and Clinch, expressly sent from Spanish Town into the parish of St. Elizabeth, confirmed the decision of Mr. Justice Colebrooke and myself, and Mr. — was again found *guilty*. The report of the court will be found on the next page.

His Excellency the Governor, then ordered the Attorney-General to proceed against Mr. — by indictment, for his illegal and cruel conduct towards his apprentices. The Grand Jury for the county of Cornwall, convened at the last March assize, *ignored the bill*; but I believe it is the intention of the executive to prefer new bills at the following assize.

A true bill was however, found against Mr. — for insulting and otherwise obstructing me, as a Special Magistrate, in the execution of my duty, which bill he traversed until the next assize, knowing, at the time he did so, that when the trial could take place, two of the principal witnesses would no longer be in the country. Immediately after the above-mentioned bill had been found against him, Mr. — commenced, through his attorney, a *series of actions* at law against me, upon the ground of "trespass," the damages of which he has actually laid at £9000!!

His Excellency the Governor, and his legal advisers, having

been fully satisfied that my conduct had been correct, just, and impartial throughout, the Attorney-General has been directed by the Governor, to defend me against any and every attack that may be made by Mr. —.

Nevertheless, I am still exposed to ruinous expenses, particularly as these actions are to be tried by prejudiced planters, who cannot divest themselves, even while performing the duties of jurymen, from showing their bitter enmity to the Special Magistrates, *to immolate one of whom, would immortalize a Jamaica jury.* An old solicitor intimated to me, “that in the event of *my being cast* in any one action for a shilling only, innumerable actions would be commenced immediately against most of the Specials, and they would make Jamaica too hot for them to remain as Magistrates in the Island.” These actions are still depending. The following is the report of the court alluded to above:—

*Copy of REPORT made to his Excellency the Most Noble the Marquis of Sligo, Governor, &c. &c. &c.*

In obedience to the commands of his Excellency the Governor, contained in Mr. Secretary Nunes’ letter of date 10th Dec. 1834, No. 804, we proceeded to the parish of St. Elizabeth, having previously given Mr. — notice that a court would be held at Southampton Pen on Wednesday, 17th inst., for the purpose of investigating the complaints of the apprentices of the said Mr. —; and we beg to report to your Excellency that Mr. — having objected to our power and authority, and not appearing before us, although duly summoned to do so, we proceeded to take the annexed examination: and we find by the evidence before us, that the negro grounds of the apprentices of Southampton Pen, in the possession of Mr. — are, for the most part of them, in an uncultivated state, occasioned by the apprentices feeling, that it is useless to cultivate the land, in consequence of the dilapidated state of the fences, and subject thereby to continual trespass from cattle.

We find that Special Justices Oldrey and Colebrooke issued an order, on the 25th Sept. last, to the said Mr. — to mend the fences of his apprentices’ negro grounds at Southampton Pen, and that the time occupied in so doing was to be paid to the said Mr. —, which order, from the evidence before us, has not been obeyed by the said Mr. —.

We also find, that Mr. — requires the labour of his apprentices at a pen called Content Hall, about seven or eight miles distant from Southampton, whither they repair on the Monday mornings, and are not permitted to return till late on the Friday evenings, by which system they have only the Saturday to work

in their grounds, and to dispose of their provisions at a market about twelve miles distant from their homes.

We also beg leave to report, from the evidence, that the apprentices in Content Pen, with the exception of three or four, have not been regularly supplied with the usual and customary clothing, according to the 12th section of the "Act for the Government of Slaves," and the 16th clause of the "Abolition Act;" and that, since the death of Dr. Owen, (which event took place in the early part of 1832,) they have only received their clothing twice.

We also beg to report, that the apprentices in Southampton and Content pens are not regularly attended by any medical practitioner, as required by the 16th clause of the "Abolition Act," and the 8th clause of the "Act in aid of the Abolition Act."

That Mr. —'s system of administering medicine himself to his apprentices is subject to great irregularity and neglect, and when that gentleman is absent from his property, they are left in the hands of ignorant and incompetent persons to administer it.

That the case of Tabitha Hewitt, as detailed in evidence before us, is one of a most cruel and atrocious nature.

Considering the services this female rendered to her master to the last moment of her power,—the cruel neglect shown her by that master during her long illness, and his unmannerly and improper conduct towards her child after her death, are crimes that require most severe punishment.

We also beg to draw your Excellency's attention to the evidence of Mr. —, the coroner, and that of Mr. —, who, when ordered by a magistrate to investigate into the cause of Tabitha Hewitt's death, instead of doing so according to law, repaired to the spot, took an external examination of the body of a female, who appears from evidence to have died from neglect, and threatened to have her son, John Nunes, punished, for complaining of the want of support, and neglect of his master towards his aged mother.

We repeat, that Mr. —, not having appeared to rebut the affidavits of Thomas Colebrooke, Esq. Special Justice, and Gustoside Tipping, Esq. respecting his conduct towards Capt. William Oldrey, Special Justice, whilst at his court at Southampton, on the 20th Sept. last, his conduct, as specified in those affidavits, we consider as fully substantiated. As regards Mr. —'s statements, Mr. — did not appear to substantiate them, and the same were denied by the letters of Captain Wm. Oldrey and Thomas Colebrooke, Esq. Special Justices. We beg leave to refer your Excellency to those letters, subjoined to the evidence taken before us.



In addition to the foregoing, we beg to repeat, that by the evidence before us, Mr. — has, up to the present day, possessed himself of the hogs, the personal properties of his apprentices, although they were kept by them in a space walled in for them; some he has sent to the pound, others he has still in his possession, thereby depriving the apprentices of the free use of their own personal individual property.

Given under our hands, this 24th day of December, 1834, at Torrington Castle, in the parish of St. Elizabeth.

(Signed) WILLIAM RAMSAY, }  
JAMES CLINCH, } Special Magistrates.

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6. A complaint was made to me, early in August last year, by the Head Constable of Biscany Estate, St. Elizabeth, that since the first of August, their master, Mr. —, has ordered the people, men, women, and children, to go to an open place selected for the purpose, there to obey the calls of nature in the presence of each other; the time directed was half an hour after their breakfast (*in their own time*), and that they were not to quit their holes or places in the line, but there, exposed to the view of the gang, they were to perform the duties of necessity: if any person went into the bush, (*i. e.* apart from the place where they were working,) then he or she would be punished, on the case being mentioned to the Special Magistrates.

The women in particular bitterly complained of this hardship: they said, "their bellies would burst before they could so expose themselves before the men."

Such an indecent spectacle, could only tend to destroy the latent modesty the females possessed, and to brutalize their feelings, instead of using such measures as would improve their manners and morals. I thought necessary to reprimand Mr. —, and I gave immediate orders for the people to perform their natural offices in the decent manner they desired.

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7. Complaints were made to me on the third of September last, by the apprentices belonging to Cabbage Valley, that Mr. —, the overseer, would not allow them time to perform the offices of nature, and that he had ordered them to do it in their own time; and if they left the hole or row to go to the bush for that purpose, apart from the gang, he would send for the Special Magistrate, who should punish them. The women cried, and implored my protection from such indecent exposure; they had not been required to do so in former times, and they hoped I would not

suffer it now. Indeed, they said, they must die rather than endure it. The women complained of their not being allowed to suckle their infant children during the hours of labour; that they were, since the first of August, deprived of nurses, and they were obliged to leave their children in their baskets, exposed to the danger of being destroyed by the hogs, and that the usual water carriers were stopped, and they were not allowed even time to quench their thirst; and many other annoyances have they been subject to since the first of August, because, they would not bind their infant children as Apprentices to their masters.

I have numerous other cases of a similar character; in some, the apprentices have been threatened to be driven from their huts, grounds, and the gardens that contain the tombs of their ancestors.

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#### 8. *Abstract of Cases, from the Correspondence of a Special Magistrate in Jamaica.*

1. Case of Sarah Richards, confined by the overseer for ten days and nights, for alleged insolence—no redress from Special Magistrate, Mr. ———.

2. Amy Archer, aged sixty years, exempted from work many years, being the subject of an incurable disease; compelled to labour since the first of August, in carrying loads of vegetables to market, a distance of ten miles. Has done so several times, but finds she can do so no more. Is now refused any support whatever from the estate.

3. Edward Gully, a sick negro, kept in the hot-house *two days and two nights, during which he never tasted a morsel of food*—(this fact sworn to). Forced in consequence, ill as he was, to go to the field to work. Charged a fortnight after, by his master, with breaking through the window of the hot-house. Explained to Mr. Dunne, the Special Magistrate, that hunger compelled him to do so. Was fined five days, two of which he paid; but refusing to pay the remaining *three days* at a time, in consequence of his provision grounds being at a great distance, and from which he obtained his food, he was again taken before Mr. Dunne, who ordered him to be flogged ten lashes on his bare back. The following week, having again refused, was sent to the police station, and ordered another flogging—(got nine lashes). Refused again, when the driver was ordered to handcuff him—made his escape, and laid his complaint before Dr. P——, S. M.

4. Herman Gully, belonging to the same master, had a bad foot. Ordered by his master into the hot-house—refused to go, as he had no one to supply him with victuals. Ordered by his master to be confined in the stocks, where he was for about nine days and nights, supplied with food by his friends. Was

then taken before Mr. Dunne, who ordered him to be kept in the stocks one day more for disobeying orders, *and to pay five days' labour* for not going into the hot-house.

5. Richard Grant, Susan Hall, Robert Hall, Margaret Shepard, and James Drysdale, complain, that, for ten weeks they have had no Friday. They further state, that their provision grounds are five miles distant from their houses, and the market twenty-five miles; that they can never go to market in consequence; that they get no salt provisions from the property; that they are allowed no cooks in the field; that one of them (James Drysdale) was put in a dungeon and confined there from five o'clock on Sunday evening, until eleven o'clock on Monday, during which he had nothing to eat or drink, without any complaint being preferred against him by his master to the Stipendiary Magistrate.

6. Maria Hamilton, who has for upwards of twenty years been labouring under asthma, and is now suffering very severely from it, has been in confinement, night and day, since last Thursday week (a period of twelve days), because she, while suffering a paroxysm of asthma, said she was unable to do the work required of her. The place of her confinement was the hospital of the estate. It had no *fire-place*, no *privy*, and no *platform* to sleep on. It was excessively cold; and in the poor woman's state of health, not only calculated to aggravate the disease, but even to risk the shortening of her life.

On the third day of her confinement, Mr. —, County Inspector of Police, happening to call at the estate, gave the overseer authority to continue the cruel imprisonment of the miserable woman.

7. *April 20th, 1835.*—Betsey Jackson, apprentice to ——— says:—"My child (twelve months old) has had fever for three days and nights—cannot keep any thing on its stomach. This morning took it to Busha, but he told me to go along to my work—said I could not. He said 'naassa (Mr. Jackson) told him that the law is, if these free children ever so sick, we must tie them on our backs and keep at work; if the pickaninies even dead self, we must still keep at our work, and that no physic must be given to the children.' There is no nurse to mind children in the field; we have to tie them on our backs all day while working. The child is very unwell, has severe fever, is teething, and has thrush."

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9. *Extract of a Letter from Mr. P. Hart, at Halfway-tree, St. Andrew's, to Daniel Hart, Esq., Kingston.*

I am also to inform you I was compelled to bring Wellington before Mr. Lloyd, under the following charges—viz. insolence,

theft, drunkenness, and absenting himself. Every charge was fully proved, quite to the *satisfaction of the Justice*. His sentence was, "to dig for a week *eighty* cane-holes daily, *with chain and collar* to his neck, and to be locked up every evening after he gives up work, and at the expiration of that time, if the complement of holes are not dug, to receive *thirty-nine lashes* on his back" (!!!) The sentence would have been more severe, but I requested Sutherland to say to Lloyd, not to flog if he could avoid it.

Park (overseer at Temple Hall) says, *he (Wellington) will not be able to dig more than forty a-day; consequently, he may expect the flagellation!!!*

(Signed)

P. HART.

*Note.*—Mr. Philip Hart keeps a tavern at Halfway-tree Wellington is one of the waiters, is a *non-prædial*, has been a house-servant all his life, never had a hoe in his hand: to dig eighty cane-holes a-day was physically impossible. The foregoing letter was given in evidence *against* Wellington.

10. *Extract of a Letter to the Marquis of Sligo, from Mr. —, dated February 3, 1835.*

1st, When children under six years old are so seriously ill as to require the mother's care for successive days, am I to compel the repayment of such time to the property, or am I to consider such cases as "absence from work with reasonable cause," under the 22nd section of the act?

2nd, Lying-in women were formerly always allowed a nurse (generally a member of their own family) to attend upon them during the nine days after delivery: am I to compel the repayment of such days to the property, and if so, by whom must the time be paid?

*Extract of a Letter from W. G. Nunes, Esq., Secretary to the Marquis of Sligo, in reply to the foregoing Questions, dated February 19th, 1835.*

Question 1st, As to the attendance of mothers on children under six years old, when ill? and

Question 2nd, As to the attendance of the relatives of lying-in women during the nine days after delivery?

Answer, That the time in both such cases, must be repaid to the property.

11. *Extract of a Communication from Mr. —, late Special Magistrate, dated 20th March, 1835.*

Mr. —, overseer, a local magistrate, with the reputation of having been all along, one of the "*tightest*" overseers in the

district, and who has two most serious charges lying at his door, of a former date, (though acquitted by coroner's inquest,) has considerable influence over the smaller class of managers in his neighbourhood. Being a local Magistrate, he is looked up to as a sort of authority, and his reading of the Abolition act, is taken for the guidance of the rest. Mr. ———, this day, wished me to proceed to the trial of charges against apprentices, none of whom were present, but he would, he said, prove his charges on the *ex parte* evidence of his constables! Confesses that he has been working the people *nine hours and a half* daily since the 1st of August! having charged half an hour's labour each in consideration of indulging them with field-cooks! not with their own consent: considers he has a right to do it, as they cannot do without cooks, and they are not mentioned in the act!

Three women, advanced in pregnancy, complained of being ordered to keep at work *till the last moment of delivery*. One, now near her time, says, that a short time ago, she complained to Mr. ——— of being heavy and unable to work, and begged leave to sit down: that Mr. ——— had her thrust into the dungeon for twenty-four hours, for making so *unreasonable* a request!!! One, who is six months gone, compelled to work in the great gang, and carry loads equal to the able men! Says, Mr. ——— makes women turn out to work two weeks after delivery! and no sort of assistance given them during the period of lying-in.

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12. *Extracts of Letters from a Stipendiary Magistrate of Jamaica, addressed to a Nobleman in this country, dated April 28, 1835.*

I do unhesitatingly declare, my Lord, that unless some very great change takes place, the condition of the poor apprentices will be as bad as ever; on some estates, indeed, they are worse off than under the old system.

At this moment the cry here is, "The whip, the whip!" I have the satisfaction of knowing that your Lordship will and must have received, ere this, strong corroborations of what I have had the honour to communicate to your Lordship, from many most respectable sources.

May 30th. I would, as a summary of all things under the present state, solemnly declare, that in many, too many instances, the situation of the apprentice is threefold as bad as it was under the old usage of slavery. To befriend these unfortunates (by which I would have your Lordship understand, the administering impartial justice) is to draw on me the odium of the whole people. Their unredressed complaints may create resistance, which will draw on coercive measures, and can have but one termination, and that—rebellion!!

13. *Copy of a Letter from a Juror on an Inquest in Jamaica, addressed to a Magistrate, dated 27th May, 1835.*

Allow me to drop you a line on a subject in which I know you will take an interest, and I crave your advice in the matter, and would request of you to ask counsel of Mr. Anderson, touching legal points.

I was a juror on an inquest held at the workhouse here, yesterday, on the body of a female apprentice, sent in by one of the Special Magistrates, on Monday, the 19th, for two weeks' hard labour.

It came out in evidence, that she was sent out to work on Tuesday, 20th, in good health, and on Saturday was obliged to be carried home from the field, and she died on Monday morning. On examining her body it was shocking to see it; her neck, shoulders, and back, downwards, showed the effects of dreadful beating and flogging. I could hardly credit my sight, particularly when told it was a female. At this time, there were only eleven jurors sworn in, and I insisted on a twelfth being procured, which was done. On proceeding with the witnesses, the coroner interfered with the jurors, and would not permit them to put questions. I insisted on doing so, as my right and duty, and elicited, that Mr. ——— had given positive orders to the driver of the gang, to use the whip or cat upon the shoulders of delinquents, particularly *the women*, to compel them to work. This had been complied with; and in this case, and, I believe, in many others, to a most dreadful extent. At my instance, Dr. Robertson was procured, and the back was stripped, and the body opened. His evidence was,—“On dissecting the back of the woman, I found, that very severe flagellation had been inflicted; but, on opening the body, I found she had had a severe inflammation in the bowels, which, in my opinion, caused her death.” A long investigation took place, and it was clearly to be seen, that monstrous inhumanity had been used. One witness was brought up, *a female*, who was sent in for a week's hard labour: her back was also dreadfully beaten, and the doctor declared, that she was not a fit subject to be sent to hard labour; remarking, if she were kept at it, she would not, or could not, undergo it, and the driver, to get the work out of her, would go on beating her in the same manner. I remarked, “Yes, and so perhaps, next week, we may have to hold an inquest upon her;” this was very fine for the coroner, and a good reason why he should try to keep us, the jurors, from sifting out the truth, and putting a stop to such monstrous disclosures. Suffice it to say, the jurors could not agree as to a verdict, and he (the coroner) directed numbers to be taken, and allowed the majority to determine. When I gave in their verdict, “That the deceased

had died from inflammation of the bowels," I and two others differed, thinking otherwise, and we were left out of the return accordingly. This I consider to be illegal, as I always considered the jurors on an inquest, ought always to be unanimous in their verdict; and, again, I consider that the Abolition law provides, that in no case is a female to be flogged; but in this manner, under a cloak, they may now be beaten and flogged worse than ever.—Mr. ——— had about thirty of his women from Woodstock put in the workhouse some days ago, for this very purpose; and I am told, he has a penal gang on the estate, and he makes his driver carry the cat and inflict punishment there. Do not suppose, for a moment, I am adducing all this, because he and I are at present at variance, but it is a fact too stubborn to meet contradiction, and which I am sure cannot be justified. Do pray look into it, and inquire as to its legality, and write to me on the subject.

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14. *Extracts from a communication made by a Special Magistrate, dated June 1, 1835.*

David Duncombe, apprentice, attached to Penlyn Castle, in Saint David's, brings before me his wife, under the following circumstances. The woman is somewhat deranged; has been so about three years; is foolish, talks nonsense, but is never mischievous; never attempted to hurt any one since she was sick; was at first under the doctor, but not for a year back; has been mostly about the yard, and working in the field for a year and a half back. After August, Busha, constantly putting her in confinement, said he would not allow her to be working about where she liked. Saturday before Christmas, the woman (her name is Louisa, alias Eliza Duncombe) picked a basket of sour Seville oranges to carry to market; was met on the road by a plantation constable, who took her back and put her in the dark hole. Next morning, Busha removed her to the hot-house, and put her in the stocks, kept her there all Christmas, but with the door open; she said she would not stop in the stocks, and broke the padlock. Busha then locked her up in the place, and has kept her locked up, night and day, ever since Christmas, now more than *five months*: in fact, she never slept out of confinement for the last seven or eight months. The place where she has been confined has no window; a little light comes through the top of the door: there is no privy in the place, and no fire-place. Busha never gave her any kind of support. David (the husband), was obliged to bring her victuals every morning before he went to work, or she might starve; had to poke them over the door, for her to get them inside. Gave the things uncooked; Busha's cook would dress for her, but hardly ever before middle of the day.

The woman, from long confinement, can hardly walk: her feet are quite tender. The complaint in her head is worse instead of better, by being locked up; never does any thing to require confinement. About three weeks back, she broke out of the place, and went away. Busha sent her husband (David) to look after and bring her back; found her in Green Valley pastures: she refused to return home to be kept in such punishment. Took her to Green Valley works, and then went and told Busha, who sent a mule for her. Still she refused: next morning Busha sent four men with a board, to carry her up. She was tied on the board with ropes round the legs and arms; ropes nearly cut through the flesh (marks still visible). They carried her up like a hog, tied to the board, from Green Valley to Penlyn Castle (three miles). Ever since, she has been locked up, as before, night and day. On Thursday night, she again got out by breaking through above the door: there was rain and breeze all that night. Friday morning, Busha sent David again to look for her, and bring her back. Found her this morning in Green Valley pastures. Have brought her before a Magistrate, to see if it is right to have her locked up constantly so, and no support, and she doing no harm.

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15. *Extract from the "Jamaica Watchman," Oct. 14th, 1835.*

I am pleased to see that humane gentlemen are exposing the conduct of some of the Special Magistrates towards female apprentices in a state of pregnancy; and as two cases in which such have been sentenced to the murderous tread-wheel have been certified to me, I send them to you for publication, in the hope that this cruel practice will be prevented, and that punishment, better suited to the case of such offenders, will be resorted to in future.

Both cases took place some months ago, in the parish of St. Thomas in the Vale. One of the unfortunate creatures came from a property near Healthful hill, and after receiving punishments, miscarried—was sent home, and, it was reported, died; but on more particular inquiry at an apprentice from that quarter, it appeared that her life had been in great danger, but that she ultimately recovered. The other belonged to the late Miss Hunter of Constant Spring, and on her demise came under the control of Thomas Edbury, Esq., who had her tried for not going to his mountain to work; and although she was very sickly, and far gone in pregnancy, she was sentenced to the treadmill, and miscarried on being taken down from it. She returned to Constant Spring with her legs dreadfully bruised, and her whole frame bespeaking the utmost wretchedness, and in a week or ten days *she died!*

Is it not the duty of the Governor here, or of the Government at home, to do something to bring to an end this system of tor-



ture now in constant operation ? The yells proceeding from the tormented wretches upon the tread-wheel, or under the driver's lash, are of the most harrowing kind that can meet the ears of a mortal ; yet it is asserted, that the supervisor, in some cases is so accustomed to his work and hardened in it, that not only can he stand with the utmost torpidity, but appear to enjoy a fiend-like gratification in adding to the distress of the afflicted. It is affirmed, that now at Rodney hall workhouse, twelve lashes are often as severe as thirty-nine formerly were, and are productive of longer sufferings to those who have the misery to receive them.

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16. *Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman lately returned from Jamaica, dated August 4th, 1835.*

I cannot but express my deep regret in having to observe, that the generally good and obedient feeling which marks the conduct of the negro, does not appear to have met with a commensurate regard and consideration in return, on the part of many of the Masters, Attorneys, and Managers. On the contrary, the latter have taken every advantage of the defects existing in the acts of the Jamaica legislature for the abolition of slavery, and the government of the apprentices ; whilst, in the next place I have to observe, that the letter of the law is too frequently perverted in the most unconscionable manner (contrary to the remedial spirit of the British act, and the farthest from the benevolent intentions of its framers), not only to grind and extort from them as much labour as possible, but to withhold from them most of the allowances, and all the indulgences, formerly extended to them as Slaves.

In addition to other causes that have loosened the ties between many masters and apprentices, and which, if long continued, will sever every bond asunder, is the highly reprehensible conduct of intimidating and harassing the apprentices, by threatening to eject them from the huts in which they were born, and the grounds from which they have been accustomed to derive their support, as soon as white labourers can be obtained to cultivate the soil. Even during the last Session of the House of Assembly, several members, to forward this system, indulged in unfounded statements against the apprentices, that they would not work for wages. Now the chairman's apprentices were actually working on his own property for wages, at the very time he himself brought those charges forward. This manœuvre of the House was resorted to, for the purpose of adding something more to its Memorial to His Majesty, to induce the British Government to be at the expense of encouraging emigration from Great Britain ; when, on receiving this aid, as is generally believed from the threats applied to them, the poor negroes would, without any provision,

be driven from their houses, and from the gardens which contain the tombs that hold their parents' remains."

17. *Extract of a Communication from Trinidad, dated July 15th, 1835.*

Since the 1st August, 1834, up to the 18th June, 1835, the apprentices, as they are hypocritically called, have been subjected to the judicially coercive authority of their owners, task-masters, and employers who, to the number of 140, were appointed by Sir George Hill, to act as Special Justices (as he says, under the act) in direct violation of the Parliamentary pledge of his Majesty's ministers. The number of these Special Planter-Justices is now reduced to *thirty-two*; but doubtless, you will concur with me in this my opinion, founded on sad experience, that nothing could be more unjust, more treacherous towards the unfortunate negro, than to entrust to such men the very power which ought to be applied in other hands, to restrain them from the exercise of further oppression.

Besides these obstacles to the operation of the act, there are other objectionable points in the act itself, some of which I will now proceed briefly to notice. Formerly, the Slave could recover any debt due to him, by a summary process free of expense in the protector's office; whereas at present, he possesses no such advantage before the Special Magistrate, except in cases arising out of contracts for work. Formerly, the negro received an allotment of as much land as he and his family could cultivate in their little leisure time, with an allowance of three pounds and a half of salt-fish per week, exacted by law; but the law in this respect has gradually been altered within a few years past, and the last Order in Council of the 5th June 1834, followed by Sir George Hill's "rules and regulations," invests the owner or employer with an arbitrary power of deciding according to his own whim or convenience, whether he will engage to maintain his apprenticed labourer by an allowance of a certain quantity of food, or substitute in lieu thereof, a small patch of ground, the annual rent of which, in a colony like this, where land is superabundant, is worth but a few shillings per annum, with a bare promise to accord four hours and a half, out of the forty-five, per week for the cultivation of the same. I contend, that even were the law complied with in this respect—which it is not—the situation of the negro, without his staple allowance of salt-fish, has been rendered infinitely worse.

It must also be borne in mind, that under the old system, bad as it was, an advocate was appointed to defend the Slave in criminal cases; but the new *Abolition* act, as it is called, leaves the unlettered and ignorant negro undefended in court.

It is well known, that the late office of the protector of slaves,

was never conducted in too humane a manner; yet I must say, the Stipendiary Magistrates are not even equally efficient. Ignorant of the habits and character of the negroes,—unacquainted with their various dialects and peculiar idiom,—deficient altogether in legal tact,—dependent for their comfort and conveniences upon the local authorities, and often upon the proprietors themselves,—in constant dread of being persecuted for “*saintism*,”—they are lamentably unfit to cope with the planters, or to render that justice to the negro, which his unfortunate situation so much requires.

The term “apprenticeship” is held by the negroes in utter contempt, particularly by the middle-aged and old men, who ask, “what have they to learn?” or “whether the white men are now going to teach them to dig cane-holes after a new fashion?” They consider it a cruel mockery of their degraded state to call them free, and still work them as Slaves, under the name of Apprentices. They certainly do consider the apprenticeship a hardship.

I conscientiously believe, from what I have heard from many of the planters, as well as from apprentices, backed by my own observation, that the apprentices have done more work this year than in any one preceding; which, notwithstanding the heavy rains that have fallen at this early stage of the season, will sufficiently appear by the returns of crop when published. The owners and agents of estates, are also planting additional quantities of canes. Task-work is still (as it has generally been) practised in this island, the extent of the task having been ascertained and fixed by the quantum of work a negro could be made to perform in a given time, under the old driving system. They now perform the same tasks they did previous to the 1st of August, 1834, on condition of receiving their former weekly allowance of three pounds and a half of salt-fish, which however, I have reason to believe is not fairly given, forming my opinion upon the well-known fact, of there being a very great deficiency in the quantity now imported, as compared with former years. On what are called well-regulated estates, they sometimes receive a gratuity of a few leaves of tobacco, a dram of spirits, or a little sugar, if they work well. On an average, they now work from ten to twelve hours per diem; but on many estates, (I have noticed several near town) the work is continued at night, Sir George Hill’s regulations, leaving too much to the discretion of the Owner or Employer in this respect. You will observe on reference thereto, that although those rules allow the Planter to employ the apprentice on Sundays, or in any work which he may be pleased to call a work of “absolute necessity,” not a word is said therein, respecting remuneration. This clause gives him so broad a discretionary power, that he possesses every means of harassing the negro.

A disturbance took place on the 30th and 31st of July, and 1st and 2nd of August, 1834, among the planters and their adherents; but there was none on the part of the negroes. The worst that has been alleged against the negroes for their conduct on that occasion, is, that they were guilty of *passive resistance*. On the 31st of July, the militia assembled in arms, with the concurrence, although not by the order, of Sir George Hill, as the orderly books of the militia will show. From the temper and expressions used and manifested on the occasion, I am convinced many negroes would have been butchered, had martial law been proclaimed; more than this;—from what has since transpired, I think it very probable, that had martial law been proclaimed, and such a result had taken place, the militia, composed mostly of free men of African extraction, would have split into two opposite and desperate parties.

Previous to the 1st of August, the negroes had been notified by their employers to turn out and do their usual work on that day, excepting on some few estates, where a holiday was announced; in which latter cases, the new apprentices spent the day in mirthful enjoyment. On the 1st and 2nd, after the militia had assembled, about 600 or 800 negroes in small parties, women included, arrived in Port of Spain; whilst many were intercepted and driven back, and others down the coast were unable to proceed to town for want of boats. They were all extremely quiet and orderly, none armed, not even with a stick; which is the more remarkable, as they seldom travel in a wild country like this, without a cutlass: the cutlass in fact, is almost always carried by them, whether on the estate or elsewhere; it is part of their equipment. Their object in coming to town, was to ascertain as they said, and as I verily believe, “whether the King had, or had not made them free, as they could not believe the contradictory reports they had heard from their owners; and if free, to receive their ‘*free papers*’ the King had sent out.” They were much beaten by the police and the militia cavalry, who repeatedly charged in the presence of Sir George Hill, without being able to provoke any act of resistance. Some of them were also struck by Mr.—, the Stipendiary Magistrate lately arrived from England; but they bore all with extraordinary patience. At length many were seized, and publicly flogged, some in Marine square, within forty yards of the Government house, under the eyes of Sir George Hill, and others in the market-place; after which, being also without food, they returned to their respective estates, where a liberal exercise of the whip, soon reduced them to prædial submission.

The apprenticeship is not popular among the planters, nor would they prefer a system of wages: their wish is, to perpetuate a system of slavery under the name of apprenticeship, or under any other by which the system may be designated.

I do most positively affirm, that the laws for protecting the Apprentices, have not been fairly carried into effect by the Special Magistrates, whether stipendiary or other.

In no case within my knowledge, is there any deduction from the forty-five hours per week in favour of the apprentices. I repeat, that the negroes work as they did before the first of August, on condition of receiving an allowance of salt-fish.

I am not aware of any laws in operation in favour of pregnant women; but this I do know, and can prove, that female apprenticed labourers, in that state which excites a feeling of commiseration and mercy in the mind of man, in any country not thoroughly debased by the demoralizing effects of slavery, have been sentenced to hard labour, and forced to work on the treadmill in the royal gaol.

In my professional capacity, I brought before the notice of the chief judge of this colony, the case of a woman named Marguerite Le Roux, who, although far advanced in pregnancy, was imprisoned by order of Mr. Stipendiary M'Kenzie. The day after her commitment, she was turned into the streets, when, fortunately, she chanced to meet a humane black, who hired a room for her accommodation. She gave birth to a child on the third day, and was re-committed to gaol by this Mr. M'Kenzie, a few weeks afterwards. All this, I afterwards proved in open court, in an action against the master for the expences of her accouchement.

There are not any measures thought of, to remove the obstacles to the safe and effectual working of entire freedom. On the contrary, every plan that can be devised, is being put into operation, to continue and perpetuate the old system of slavery, under the name of apprenticeship, without any regard as to whether the victims be white, brown, or black.

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18. *Copy of a Letter to His Excellency the Marquis of Sligo, from the Rev. B. B. Dexter, dated Rio Bueno, July 18, 1835.*

MY LORD MARQUIS,

The facts detailed in the accompanying depositions having come to my knowledge, I forward them for your Excellency's information. Your Excellency would long since have been in possession of them, but for the illness of the party aggrieved, which has, till recently, prevented him from taking the preparatory steps. Nothing which can now be done can benefit *him*, he having already endured the punishment awarded against him; but an investigation into this matter would, without doubt, prevent such acts of cruelty and oppression for the future. Your Excellency will perceive, that this is the more requisite, from the fact, that other proprietors in the neighbourhood have forbidden their

apprentices to attend prayer-meetings, on pain of being dealt with in the same way; thus setting completely at defiance the Act of the 52nd of George III., which protects congregations of not more than twenty persons, met together for religious worship, though in an unlicensed house. I feel it my duty to add, that, by the same post which conveys this communication to your Excellency, I have forwarded a copy of the deposition and commitment to the Society in England to which I have the honour to belong.\*

I am, my Lord,

Your obedient, humble servant,  
(Signed) B. B. DEXTER.

*Copy of Affidavit by J. J. Higgin.*

*Jamaica ss.*

John Isaac Higgin, of Caledonia, in the parish of St. Ann, being sworn, deposeth, that on Monday the 20th day of April, he was tasked by his master to hand-pick one cwt. of coffee. Having completed his task, he, the deponent, went in the evening, in company with Joseph Stewart and Adam Clarke, both of the same property, to Mount Nebo, in the said parish, the property of Ebenezer Peat, Esq., to attend a prayer-meeting. Before the meeting commenced, when not more than seventeen persons were present, he, the deponent, was talking, respecting a man who had been stopped with a quantity of stolen coffee in his possession; and he, the deponent, told the people who were assembled, he hoped he never should hear of any one on the property stealing, to sell to such persons, as it would bring a disgrace, not only on themselves, but upon him, the deponent, as belonging to the same religious society with them. While he was saying this, Mr. Peat rushed into the house, armed with a sword and a pistol, and followed by his son Mr. Henry Peat, who also carried a pistol. Addressing himself to the deponent, Mr. E. Peat said, "If you dare to stir, I will blow your brains out." Deponent replied, "No, Sir, I shall not run, for I am doing no harm at all, and I may as well have my brains blown out, as deny the word of God." Mr. E. Peat then addressed Alexander Gordon, the head-constable on the property, and the tenant of the house in which the meeting was held, saying, "I always heard you were a rogue, and now I find you out, harbouring a preacher." He, Mr. Peat, then asked Gordon for a rope, and on his replying that he had none, Mr. Peat took down some bark, tied the hands of deponent and Stewart, and led them away to his own house, frequently putting the pistol to deponent's head, and threatening to blow out his brains, if he should attempt to escape. They, the deponent and Stewart,

\* The Baptist Missionary Society.

were then locked up in a dungeon, without any refreshment but a little water. On Thursday morning, their hands having been again tied with a strong rope, they, the deponent and Stewart, were sent, without refreshment, under the charge of an estate's constable, to Scarborough, the residence of James L. Hilton, Esq., who, after he had heard the complaint, produced a pair of handcuffs, and said to Mr. E. Peat, "Which is he?" Mr. Peat, pointing to the deponent, said, "That is the preacher." The handcuffs were then put on the deponent, and he and Stewart were confined in separate dungeons, without food or water. This was before eight o'clock in the morning, and nothing was brought to the deponent, nor was the door opened, till about noon the next day, when two maiden plantains were put into each of deponent's hands, the handcuffs still remaining on him, and a little water was given. The same afternoon they were taken by the police to Brown's Town, where they were shut up without food or water. About noon the next day, they were brought before the magistrates assembled in petty sessions, who committed deponent to the house of correction for one month. After the examination, Mr. Henry Peat urged the policemen to give deponent something to eat, as he feared that unless they did so, he would not reach St. Ann's Bay alive. The policemen replied, that that was not their business; and had it not been for the kindness of a friend, who lent deponent money to buy food, he must have gone on fasting, having eaten only four maiden plantains from Monday evening to Thursday evening, and having been marched about from place during that time.

JOHN ISAAC HIGGIN, his mark (X).

Sworn before me this 11th July, 1835.

(Signed) JOHN KELLY.

*Copy of Affidavit by Alex. Gordon.*

Alexander Gordon, head constable on Mount Nebo, having heard the foregoing deposition of John Isaac Higgin read, maketh oath and saith, that so much of it as relates to the meeting at his house, and the seizure of Higgin by Mr. Peat, is strictly and entirely true.

ALEXANDER GORDON, his mark (X.)

Sworn before me this 23rd July, 1835.

(Signed) JOHN KELLY.

*Copy of Committal.*

Petty Sessions held this 23rd day of April, 1835.

Present, James L. Hilton, Henry Thayle, John Strachan, and Allen Hilton. Isaac Higgin, an apprentice to John M'Farlane,

Esq., was charged, upon the oath of Ebenezer Peat, with holding nightly meetings for teaching and preaching. From the evidence produced on both sides, the Court decided the man to be a vagabond, for going about without a written pass from his master, and sentenced him to one month's hard labour in the House of Correction. These are, therefore, to authorize you to receive the body of the said Isaac Higgin for the purpose aforesaid.

Given under our hands and seals, this 23rd day of April, 1835.

(Signed) JAMES L. HILTON, S. M.  
JOHN STRACHAN, S. M.  
ALLEN HILTON, S. M.

*To the Keeper of the House of Correction,  
St. Ann's Bay.*

To this communication, as I have said, I received an answer from the Secretary, who requested me to send him an attested copy of the committal, and promised to acquaint me with the result. The attested copy was immediately sent; but from that time, I have heard nothing of the matter.

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### DOMINICA.

*Extracts from Communications received from Dominica, in  
December last.*

1. On the 6th of July, Solomon, attached to the Rosalie estate, was sentenced by Mr. Stipendiary ———, to receive thirty-nine lashes, and to work six Saturdays for his master, under the following circumstances:—

Solomon was set on guard *one night* without consent, and without remuneration (such is the practice on that estate, and on almost all the estates): something was said to have been stolen during his guard. He was taken before the Magistrate of the quarter, who adjudged him to work three Saturdays for his master. The first Saturday came on, and Solomon did not turn out. He was re-taken to the Magistrate, to whom he stated, that he knew he had three Saturdays to give to his master, but that having an old grandmother, and an orphan child to *support*, he had not found it convenient to turn out for his master the first Saturday that came on after the sentence. The Magistrate further adjudged him thirty-nine lashes. Solomon escaped before this sentence was carried into effect, and went to complain to Mr. Stipendiary ———, who, on the deposition of Solomon's master, passed the sentence above-mentioned. The thirty-nine lashes were inflicted, and the apprentice was committed to gaol, in order to his being conducted to the estate by a ranger (a sort of military personage). Whilst he was in prison, I became



acquainted with his case, and at his request, wrote to the Magistrate, informing him of all the particulars; under the impression, that he had not been made fully acquainted with them at the time he passed the sentence. The magistrate took no notice of my communication, but on the fourteenth day after the infliction of the thirty-nine lashes, ordered a ranger to escort Solomon from gaol to his master's estate. On their way, they met the master, who ordered them to return. They went back to town, and the Magistrate further committed Solomon to prison, where he remained seven days more, at the expiration of which, he was sent to the estate. Mr. Stipendiary —, who by this time had become fully acquainted with all the circumstances of this case, went to the estate along with Solomon, instituted a fresh inquiry into the affair, and adjudged Solomon thirty-nine lashes again. Twice did this man receive thirty-nine lashes, besides enduring twenty-one days' imprisonment, and having to lose six Saturdays; when it was his master that ought to have been punished, for having compelled him to work during the night, without asking his consent, and without remuneration, and the guilt of the apprentice was pronounced too, by three Magistrates.

2. March 14th. (I was present at the investigation of this case, and it is recorded in the book of the Magistrates, as I state it here). Joseph, attached to the Copthall estate, stood charged, before the two justices above-named, with having stolen about four pounds of sugar and two pounds of fish. He admitted the charge, but pleaded that the manager had starved him in the hospital, and had otherwise ill-treated him. The head constable of the estate deposed, that Joseph had escaped *from the hospital* on the night on which the theft was committed. Two other apprentices deposed, that whenever Joseph got food in the hospital, it was always one insufficient meal only, every twenty-four hours; that at times, he was left two days without food, being told by the manager at noon, that he was a lazy fellow, and could not expect to be fed, and might go where he liked to seek food, provided he returned at two o'clock to the hospital; that though sick, and in the hospital, he was occasionally sent to the field, in going to and returning from which, he was flogged when from illness and exhaustion he could not keep pace with the gang; that he often fell on the road from weakness, and whilst lying on the ground, the superintendent used to flog and goad him onward; that the superintendent carried a cat in the field. The Magistrates examined the back of the apprentice, and at the request of Mr. Rainy, who interested himself on behalf of Joseph, recorded, that they had discovered fresh marks of recent flagellation.

The Magistrates could not discover enough evidence here to decide, though the evidence was not in any way contradicted,

but was rather corroborated by the Manager himself, who admitted, that he did authorize the superintendent to carry a cat. They desired the manager to bring forward the superintendent, who having made his appearance on the 16th, deposed, that he recollected to have flogged Joseph twice, once when he found him lying in the road; that he received a cat from the manager, and had a standing order to flog the young people, particularly Joseph (twenty-six years old!), when he would not work or walk; that Joseph was occasionally sent to the field, when, by all appearances he was sick; that deponent had himself been in hospital on two occasions; the first time he remained one week, during which he received no food from the manager; the second time he was allowed only some soup when he took physic, the manager telling the hospital people at noon, to go and get their meals where they best could, provided they returned at two o'clock. Thomas produced the cat which he used in the field, and said the manager had the day before taken out three tails from it.

3. The magistrates said, they would not decide until after hearing the hospital nurse; they however, never gave orders that she should be brought up, and the matter entirely dropped so far as respects the manager, who, after docking three tails from the cat, quitted Copthall estate, and retired to a distant part of the island. Mr. — took charge of the estate, and on the 28th of the same month, applied to one of these very magistrates, for permission to keep this very man Joseph in the stocks, for the pretended purpose of his cure (*mal d'estomac*). The Magistrate gave permission, and on the 8th April, the unfortunate Joseph was found dead in irons. On the evening of the seventh, it had been reported to the Manager, that the man was very ill, and could take no food. The man died almost naked, and the Manager refused the father, clothing for the burial, which was supplied out of charity by a person now in London. Boland, the brother of this man, and attached to the same estate, took the affair to heart, and is now a madman.

For *an* offence, the Abolition Act limits confinement in the stocks for *six* days; for *no* offence, the deceased was kept in the stocks *ten* or *eleven* days.

4. *June.* Old Joseph, of Copthall estate, was kept in the hospital *five* or *six* days *without any food whatever* from the manager. He was indebted for life, during this period, to a fellow apprentice, who gave him a morsel out of his meals. On the seventh day, the manager gave him a dose of jalap, and ordered him to the field immediately. The man represented that he was too weak, and asked for a little food to enable him to recover some strength, but all in vain. He staggered his way to

the field, and the medicine beginning to operate, his strength entirely failed, and he fell. The superintendent reported the man's helpless condition to the Manager, who ordered him to go and drag the man to the field. He went to do so, but the man falling on being touched, was left alone. Not being able to procure maintenance on the estate, he left it and went to town, where he remained, begging his bread from door to door until the 7th of August, when he was found dead in the streets. An inquest was held. The coroner did his utmost to suppress the truth, insulted and damned the jury, one of whom told him he was putting words in the mouth of the witness; repeatedly refused to receive their verdict: the jury, accidentally composed of a large proportion of coloured persons, persisted, and at last recorded their verdict of death "through want, and the common necessities of life having been unprovided to the said Joseph on the part of the manager of the Copthall estate."

5. By a law of the island, the coroner is bound to file the verdict in the office of the clerk of the crown, *forty-eight hours* after delivery, in order if necessary, that parties may be prosecuted. The coroner kept back the verdict for *sixteen days*, and filed it *the very day* the Grand Jury, empannelled for the Grand Sessions, was discharged, to meet again in six months, so that no notice could be taken at that court of the verdict. These are facts well known to the authorities of the island, none of whom ever thought of interfering. Between the 5th and 7th of September, two inquests were held by the same coroner, and on the very 7th, the two verdicts were filed: no one, and particularly no friend, was implicated in these verdicts.

6. On the 6th of August, the day before that on which old Joseph (the above case) was found dead in the streets, Simèron, attached to the same estate, died in the hospital. For five weeks, *up to the moment of his death*, this man was allowed but one insufficient meal every twenty-four hours, that meal consisting of *madère* (a root almost universally set apart by the negroes themselves, for the feeding of pigs), *without any meat or any thing else whatever*.

7. On the 8th of August, two days after Simèron's death, Negresse and Celeste, attached to the same estate, went to complain to Mr. Stipendiary —, and deposed on oath, that they were just from the hospital, where they had been kept six days without being allowed any food by the Manager. The Magistrate wrote to the Manager, requesting his attendance, but this one being sick, the complaint became stale, and was forgotten altogether.

8. Mr. — is a planter, with some six hundred apprentices under his charge, as master and attorney. On his own estate,

where he resides, the apprentices cannot command even their *Sunday*; if they leave the estate on that day, or on their Saturday, without obtaining a *pass* from the master, they suffer the punishment of the *dark hole* on their return. On the Colibri estate, for which Mr. ——— is the attorney, the same practice prevails. I have seen many of these passes, and have in my possession one dated on *Saturday*, and made good *only for that day*, so that the apprentice was obliged to find himself on the estate on the *Sunday*, being thereby prevented from attending divine service, if he felt so inclined.

9. The day before the apprenticeship law came into operation, Mr. ——— caused to be inflicted on his slave Hector, thirty-nine lashes, for a dispute between the man and the driver of the estate. Hector went to complain to one of the Stipendiaries, who gave him a letter for Mr. ———. On the 1st of August, Hector, instead of being the complainant, was arraigned before two magistrates, who committed him to prison to stand his trial. In the following month, he was brought up before the Grand Sessions, when the Attorney-General informed the court, (as recorded in the minutes) that the evidence against Hector was insufficient to admit of an indictment. Thereupon, Mr. ——— made an affidavit in court, declaring that Hector had threatened the life of the driver; but he did not tell the court, he had already given the man thirty-nine lashes. Upon this affidavit, the court committed the man to prison, until he could give security for his good conduct. Hector offered Mr. ——— two of his fellow apprentices, Harry and Chance, as securities. Mr. ——— refused, saying he wanted "*free people*." Six months elapsed, and another court of Grand Sessions came on; Hector was not brought up as he ought to have been, that his situation might be further taken into consideration.

Hector had been in prison twelve months when I became acquainted with his case. At his request, I prepared a memorial for him to the Governor-in-chief, residing in Antigua, requesting that his Excellency might be pleased to interfere on his behalf. An affidavit, stating the facts, was drawn up, and Hector requested Mr. Stipendiary James, to go to the gaol to swear him to the affidavit. After reading the affidavit, the Magistrate said, he would not administer the oath before seeing Mr. President Lockhart. He went away and did not return. The memorial, with the affidavit, without being sworn, was forwarded to the Governor-in-chief, through Mr. President Lockhart, necessarily.

Immediately after Hector's communication was received by Mr. President Lockhart, the same Magistrate who had refused to administer the oath, proceeded to the gaol, and proposed to release him from prison, if he would reveal the person who had prepared the memorial for him. Hector refused. A few

days after, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Lockhart's secretary, went to the gaol with the captain of a vessel bound to Trinidad, and proposed to Hector to release him, if he would consent to quit the island. Hector refused to go to Trinidad.

Pending the appeal to the Governor-in-chief, a court of Grand Sessions came on, and, thanks to the memorial, Hector was not forgotten in gaol this time: he was brought up, but only to be re-consigned to prison. The Attorney-General informed the Court of the representation which Hector had made to the Governor-in-Chief, stating at the same time, that "*he* was the person who had advised the magistrate not to swear the man to the affidavit; he knew the wicked and designing person who had written out the memorial; he could prove his hand-writing." Thus it is a crime in the eyes of his Majesty's Attorney-General of Dominica, for any man to help, by lawful means, an unfortunate and suffering negro. The Attorney-General, who, twelve months before, had found the evidence insufficient, now exhibited two fresh affidavits against Hector. The driver, whose life is said to have been threatened, and who had never been introduced into court before, now made his appearance, and swore to the fact. The court sent Hector to prison, until he could furnish security. Twelve months before, he offered two of his fellow apprentices; he was told these were not *free* people. The man will perish in prison, if his release is to depend upon his getting *free* people as his security. All this suffering, which still continues, has been entailed upon the unfortunate man, from his going to complain against Mr. ——— for the thirty-nine lashes inflicted upon him in consequence of his quarrel with the very driver whose life he is said to have threatened.

10. Some time about March, 1835, a *white* man, named Charles Lewis, was committed by two Magistrates for extensive robbery, under circumstances of great criminality, such as using skeleton keys: these Magistrates declaring they could not admit him to bail, he remained in prison a short time, and was bailed on his representing the ill state of his health. The court of Grand Assize came on in August last, and Lewis did not make his appearance. The Attorney-General stated to the court, that the evidence was too conflicting to admit of an indictment. One of the Magistrates who bailed Lewis, after they had declared the case not bailable, is the brother-in-law of the Attorney-General, and sat as judge in this court. The court called upon Mr. Withnell, the party robbed, to say whether he was desirous of dropping the matter. Mr. Withnell said, he felt delicate on the subject, and there the matter ended, Lewis being not even made to forfeit his recognizance. At that same court, three *black* men were prosecuted for *theft*: two were sentenced to be hanged, and

the other (for stealing a rabbit) to be transported. At the same court also, three apprenticed labourers received fifty lashes each for *theft*, and two (a male and female) stood in the pillory for the same offence.

11. Some time in January, 1835, Mr. ——— charged a female apprentice of his, with having refused to work. The woman stated in her defence, that she was far advanced in pregnancy, and could not work: the doctor stated, that he believed she was eight months gone. The Magistrate was loath to punish her, but Mr. ——— urged upon him, that “no matter her situation, he was entitled to the full quantum of labour allowed by law,” viz. nine hours a-day, and she was sentenced to solitary confinement and low diet.

12. In February, 1835, Xiste, a free black man, was sentenced to three months’ hard labour in the chain gang, for an assault. He is in indigent circumstances, and lived whilst undergoing the punishment, on charity for some five weeks. The term of his confinement having expired, he could not be released before paying the gaol fees, and the expense of food supplied him, during the latter part of his imprisonment, by the Provost-marshal. He presented a petition to the Assembly. I succeeded in passing a resolution for charging the expences to the Colony, and the concurrence of the Council was requested; the Attorney-General opposed it, and proposed and passed an amendment, that before his release, Xiste should give security for his good conduct for *two years*. The resolution embracing this amendment, though not without opposition in the Assembly, passed the Legislature; but up to the beginning of October (after eight months’ imprisonment, instead of three, according to sentence) the man was still in gaol, and I have every reason to believe is still there, not being able to procure the required security.

13. In February, 1833, Casimir Birmingham, a black man, free, was sentenced to *six months’* imprisonment, and to pay a fine of £100. Some fourteen months after the expiration of the term of his sentence, he petitioned the legislature, stating his utter inability to pay the fine. The Assembly passed a resolution for his release, but the Attorney-General opposed it in Council, and the unfortunate man is still in prison, where he has now been nearly three years, and where he must remain until the Attorney-General relaxes, or unless some higher power interfere.

## CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

*Extract of a Letter, dated Cape of Good Hope, June 2, 1835.*

1. Jacob, an apprentice of Abraham Marais, received thirty lashes on 14th April, 1835, for absenting himself from his master's employ. After receiving the punishment, he declared that he would not remain in his master's service. The case was *immediately* referred to the Magistrate, and the result was, an *immediate* infliction of fifteen additional lashes on his body, suspended from the whipping-post, his feet hanging above a foot from the ground.

2. Eva, a female apprentice of the widow de Leeun, was condemned on April 15th, 1835, for insolence towards Field Cornet Theron, to labour at the public-works in chains, for one month. After working but part of one day at the public works, she was allowed to remain, the rest of the time of punishment, in the prison in irons.

3. Philida, a female apprentice of D. Marais, was condemned on May 11th, 1835, to be put in the stocks for a certain number of days, and then to be confined in irons. She had complained to the Magistrate of having been illegally punished by her mistress. A day for hearing both parties was appointed; in the mean time, (as the girl states,) she became terrified, and ran away to Cape Town, where she was taken up as a deserter, brought back to the Paarl, and punished as above stated. She is still in irons.

4. An apprentice boy, about nine years of age, was severely beaten by his master, Joban Carel Poigt; his mother lodged a complaint before Mr. Villiers, the Justice of the Peace, the Stipendiary Magistrate not being at home. The child was provided for, and its bruises relieved by cold applications in the prison, till the Magistrate's return. In the mean time, the case was reported to him at Zwartland, by Mr. Villiers, as a case of atrocious cruelty. On the Magistrate's return to the Paarl, he heard the mother's complaint; inquired if she had instigated the child to complain, and whether the child were well fed and clothed. Being answered in the affirmative, he dismissed the child, and condemned the mother to sit six hours in the stocks, for bringing a frivolous complaint before him. This happened about January 23rd.

## MAURITIUS.

*Extract from the Colonial Newspaper "La Balance," dated October 31st, 1835.*

First, as to the slaves; or, as in mockery they are called, apprentices, we may without hesitation state, that for them, with

perhaps one solitary exception, there is no justice. It is rare that the master actually uses the cat-o'-nine-tails, but in every other respect, the position of the slave-apprentice in this island is not what it was intended to be by the Legislature of England. Both the spirit and the letter of the law, with regard to the apprentices' food, work, clothing, Sunday labour, payment for extra hours, religious or moral instruction, are evaded or partially administered. The Magistrates, who should protect, as well as punish the apprentice, sacrifice duty to popularity, and to a tranquil enjoyment of their salaries. However justly an apprentice may complain, it is always with a dread of punishment for the mere act of complaint. Their representations are judged of in secret; no one is present to assist or defend the ignorant and simple; no disinterested party ever hears decisions, conceived not for the ends of justice, but for the purposes of friendly accommodation. On some estates, the apprentices are vexed by prohibitions against their rearing pigs or poultry, or exercising any sort of industry on their masters' property. On others, they are harassed by frequent roll-calls on Sundays, or by refusals to grant passes for going more than two or three miles. With some, it is a sport to make them undergo a sort of drill with their hoes, in ridicule of the British exercise. With others, attendance on Divine worship is held up *in terrorem*, and made a kind of punishment. In a case which occurred in Port Louis lately, it appeared that a negress had been repeatedly beaten, and was *chained* for three days to her mistress's bed, because she objected to weaning her own child, and suckling and exclusively attending on the infant of her mistress. A complaint on this matter was taken to Mr. Seignette, who enjoined the negress to comply with her mistress's orders!

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### III. EXTRACTS RELATIVE TO THE CONDUCT OF STIPENDIARY AND SPECIAL MAGISTRATES.

*Extract of a Letter from a late Stipendiary Magistrate, dated April 23th, 1835.*

Many of the Magistrates in the island of Jamaica live with the planters, and the acts of some of them are revolting to human nature.

You are too well aware how provident that act was, which even denied adjudication by local Magistrates, between master and apprentice: what decision then, can be expected from a Magistrate, towards the person in whose house he lives, at whose board he sits, whose stable, oxen, &c. &c. are at his full command?

You will scarcely credit that such acts as *riveting* iron collars round the necks of females, inflicting fifty lashes on



males *unheard in their defence*, and sentencing females to the penal gangs for fourteen days together, with the addition of being worked on the treadmill, three times a-day, during that period, without their ever having been heard in their defence, could be practised by these gentlemen: yet so it is. When such acts are represented, as they have been, the answer has been, "The Act provides for you:" but where are these unfortunates to obtain the means of seeking redress by that law which they are referred to in the Act!! I have said, however, that I would state facts, and I proceed. The case of the women sentenced, as I have mentioned, *unheard*, was by the order of ——— (acting as a Special Magistrate, in the interior district of St. James). The women belong to Leogan estate, and Mr. Hyslop is the attorney. This complaint was brought before me: I investigated and found it correct. What was the result? I was forthwith abused by all.

The first action of Mr. Cocking, when he was ordered to St. James's, was, to have triangles built up as fixtures on the different estates he adjudicated for. The first act of Mr. Farrar, when he was ordered to Montpelier, was to form penal gangs on the estates; and as the locks of the iron collars were not considered sufficiently secure, they were regularly riveted on an anvil, the women being put down for the purpose, till the job was finished.

*Extract of a letter from a Gentleman, dated Port Royal Mountains, Jamaica, 28th September, 1835:—*

I have made no statements, but what I am firmly convinced are substantially true; most of them have been grounded on the depositions on oath of the aggrieved parties or their connexions, frequently confirmed by impartial persons. In no instance has my object been to injure individuals; in fact, most of the Magistrates whose conduct I have reported, are personally unknown to me: my sole motive has been to procure the correction of abuses.

It is impossible for me, Sir, to convey to you even a faint idea of the feeling of rancorous enmity which prevails against me throughout the whole community, in consequence of my exposures; but I dare say you know enough of Colonial society, to be aware, that it is more dangerous to a man's reputation to be suspected of good feeling towards the negro population, than to be suspected even of *felony*, and is more likely to affect his footing in society. During slavery, it was held an unpardonable crime, almost amounting to treason, to expose abuses; and I regret to say, the feeling is in no respect diminished. Am I to be sacrificed at the shrine of this evil spirit?

The conduct of parties here, is in no way amended: true, the disallowance of the last amended act, has put an end to the scandalous cruelties of *private penal gangs*; but oppression and injustice in other forms, are as rife as ever. "The eight hours' system" is daily extending over the island, and gives rise to the infliction of constant punishment.

Only a few weeks ago, the master of a gang in the immediate vicinity of Spanish Town, imposed the eight hours' system on his people, *confessedly as a punishment*; the people resisted it by taking the half Friday, as they had previously done ever since the first of August; the Special Magistrate was called in, and the usual coercion being about to be inflicted, the apprentices ran off in a body to the Governor, to claim his protection: he refused, and report says, addressed them in no gentle terms. On their return, they were seized by the Police, and brought to trial: the men, amounting I believe to fourteen or fifteen, were flogged in the workhouse, and the women (about twenty-five in number) sent to the house of correction!!

In a former letter to you, I mentioned the case of two women from Trafalgar and St. George's, who had been sentenced to work in chains and collars on the property; one, for the space of two weeks, for not working on Sunday, in payment of a nurse for her child; the other, for four weeks, on account of having had a quarrel with a fellow apprentice in the field. The sentence of the latter had only been half completed, when the complaint was laid before me; the iron collar was on her neck at the time. I sent them with a letter, containing the particulars of their case, to the Governor. I received a reply from the Secretary, saying, the case was referred to the Magistrate of the district, the very party accused! And what were the results of this application for justice? Why, the moment the two women returned home from Spanish Town, the brutal overseer insisted on refixing the cattle chain to the woman, whose sentence had not been completed. She refused to allow it; was thrown down, and the chain attached by force. She was then ordered to go to the field to work with the gang: she refused, as being unable to work with such a heavy chain attached to her neck; the Special Justice was called in, who, in addition to all she had gone through, sentenced her to *ten days' solitary confinement in the workhouse dungeon at Buff-Bay!*

A short time since, I received a letter from a Special Magistrate (Mr. ———) in reply to a friendly remonstrance of mine on the subject of one of his sentences: in that reply, he most distinctly denies the right of the Governor to interfere with his sentences! Yes! I fear most of the Magistrates claim exemption from all responsibility for their conduct towards the apprentices. Mr. ——— *never allows an accused apprentice to defend him-*

*self*, or produce any evidence in defence: the accused is merely brought forward to hear the sentence. If he attempt to speak, he is told to hold his tongue. "I have passed sentence already—I have heard what your overseer, or master, says—that is enough!" This I have on the oaths of several respectable apprentices from various plantations. I am bringing it under Lord Sligo's notice, but I fear no good will result.

Only yesterday, several most flagrant acts of cruel injustice were detailed to me, as having occurred last week. One, an apprentice of Green Valley, named Bristol, had engaged to work for hire on his own days, Friday and Saturday. On the latter day, about mid-day, the people who had been hired, were taking their breakfast; the book-keeper, who was superintending their work, ordered them to rise instantly and resume their labour, or he would keep them later in the evening. The man Bristol observed, "It can't be that you are going to take our time for the sake of breakfast time; it must be for turning out late in the morning, if you are going to take our four o'clock." The book-keeper said he had no business to speak to him, and ordered him to go away, that he would not allow him to work any longer. The man said, as he had been employed for the day, he should continue for the rest of the afternoon. The book-keeper ordered the driver to take the man down to the works, *to be put in the dungeon*: the man refused to go into the cell. Last Thursday he was taken before Mr. ———, *not to be tried*, but to be sentenced to *twenty-five lashes* on the back for *insolence* to the book-keeper: he was not allowed to say a word in defence or explanation,—he received his flogging. Next morning he applied to Mr. ——— to order him to be paid for his two days' labour; but this Magistrate told the poor fellow, that as he had been ordered not to work (on the Saturday afternoon), *he had no right to payment!* Thus the man was robbed of his hard-earned wages, and received twenty-five lashes, at the instance of a man sworn to act justly, and receiving a handsome stipend for doing so. This is, no doubt, excellent encouragement for the apprentices to work for hire in their own time! It is worthy of remark, that Mr. ———, the Magistrate, slept at Green Valley that night, after inflicting this and other punishments nearly as unjust, and the scene of revelry and jocund mirth is described to have lasted till nearly daylight next morning.

At Dallas Castle estate, a couple of weeks ago, Mr. ——— sentenced (but did not try, for Mr. ——— tries nobody) a feeble, superannuated, worn-out creature, to hard labour in the parish workhouse. He had been put to watch at a corn piece; a hog broke through the fence one night, and ate a few blades of corn: such was the charge. He and another old man (the particulars of whose case I have not learned) were sent to the workhouse

together, but the overseer of the workhouse, happening to possess a little more common sense and good feeling than the Magistrate, absolutely refused to receive two such wretched objects into the institution, and sent them back to the estate! What overseer, however brutalized, would have dreamed of acting in this manner during Slavery? But the fact is, Magistrates are now inflicting punishments, in cases where the planters would formerly really have deemed them quite unworthy of notice. In apportioning their punishments, few Magistrates observe any discrimination as to age, sex, condition, or previous character. Women with sucking children, and *pregnant women*, are sentenced to the workhouse, to work in chains and collars, and to walk the tread wheel, (and by the way, it is a notorious fact, that women are frequently flogged on these tread wheels;) apprentices of both sexes, of the best characters, are ruthlessly degraded, by being sent to the workhouse, to associate with the most depraved and worthless beings. Only a fortnight ago, Mr. ——— sentenced, in his usual manner, *without trial*, a most respectable female apprentice, to seven days' hard labour in the workhouse. For fifteen years, this woman has been the confidential servant of Mrs. ———, had been *nurse* to all her children, and had full charge of her domestic establishment; yet Mrs. ——— had the heart to drag this faithful servant before the Magistrate to be punished, and for what? The woman had refused to be fed out of the house like a child, but insisted on having the days, allowed by law, to provide for her own support, she being now a married woman. There are so many peculiar features in this case and others, decided at the same time by Mr. ———, that I purpose making a special report of them to the executive.

Last Thursday, an apprentice, the head-constable of a small plantation, called Essex, whose respectability of character and trust-worthiness may be judged of by the fact, that he has been intrusted with the sole management of the plantation for several years, and is, *bonâ fide*, overseer of it;—this man was summoned before Mr. ———, at the instance of some neighbouring overseer, on account of some very frivolous dispute. The moment the charge was laid, Mr. ——— pronounced sentence, and refused to hear a word from the man in defence—ordered handcuffs to be put on him, put him in charge of the police, and sent him to the workhouse to hard labour for five days. No notice of trial was given to the man's mistress, as the law directs. For this, however, I believe Mr. ——— is to be prosecuted.

The eyes of Government must be opened at last, to what is going on—they cannot be deceived much longer. The discontent of the negroes is increasing every day. They loudly and generally declare, they would much rather have been left as they were for the six years, than be subjected to this anomalous state

of apprenticeship. To preserve peace, and prevent most serious future mischief, even to the planters themselves, I would most earnestly counsel the early termination of the present system. It has been fairly tried, and instead of proving what was intended—a means for conducting the negro population quietly and gradually to a state of absolute freedom, and to give time for the establishment of better feelings between them and their masters—it has been the fertile source of oppression and injustice, and has engendered far more dangerous feelings, than I ever knew to exist during the times of Slavery.

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*Extract of a letter from a Gentleman resident at Trinidad, dated July 15th, 1835:—*

Within my own personal experience, the Stipendiaries in Port of Spain have refused to allow apprentices to avail themselves of professional aid, voluntarily offered, in cases brought before them. The proceedings are private, except to the parties immediately concerned; by which mode of *trial*, the Special Justice is effectually screened from exposure, and the illiterate negro, not only left to himself for defence, (generally without being allowed to cite his witnesses), but in cases of illegal decisions upon ex-parte evidence, debarred from any redress whatsoever; for to say, the ordinary tribunals of the country are open to a man deprived of his personal liberty *by law*, without the means of litigating, or of obtaining an advocate to undertake his cause, would be worse than hypocrisy.

The exercise of corporal punishment, has, in some instances, come to my knowledge since August the 1st, 1834. The Hon. Henry Murray, a Member of Council, a planter, and a Special Magistrate, sentenced one of his apprenticed labourers to be flogged. The common custom has been, and still is, for one planter to send his apprentices to be tried and flogged by some neighbouring planter, who is a Special Justice, and vice versa. The Special Planter-Justices generally resort to corporal punishment (except in cases of females) because the negro, after having been flogged, can be made to work in a few days; and because, should the sentence be imprisonment, the master would be inconvenienced for the time. The Special Stipendiary Justices generally include corporal punishment in the sentences awarded against the apprentices, excepting in cases where women are the delinquents; which latter are subjected, equally with the men, to solitary confinement in the dark and damp cachôts lately built on many estates, or to imprisonment with (or sometimes without) hard labour in the Royal gaol.

In cases of imprisonment, the loss of time to the master is afterwards invariably exacted out of the extra hours or spare time of the apprentice.

Many negroes, apprenticed labourers, have been also flogged in the Cabildo Yard in Port of Spain, before and since the 1st of August, by order of the Chief of police, formerly a planter, whom Sir George Hill invested with the powers of a Magistrate for that purpose. They were flogged between six and seven o'clock in the morning, before the clerks of the adjacent registry office had assembled. The cries, which I myself have heard, were a nuisance to the neighbourhood ; but at length the apparatus, a sort of crucifix, upon which they were extended during the infliction, was destroyed, and the flagellations discontinued in that neighbourhood, in consequence of my personal interference ; as I am ready to prove by evidence before any Court of Justice.

I have good authority for stating, that at one station alone, namely, that of Tacarigua, on the Orange Grove estate, belonging to Mr. Burnley, a Member of Council, whose manager, Mr. Lee, is a Special Justice by appointment of Sir George Hill, upwards of 400 punishments have been inflicted since the 1st of August last.

The complaints originate almost exclusively with the owners and employers, the apprentices having despaired of obtaining any redress, but on the contrary, *certain punishment for preferring complaints*. They embrace a variety of charges, which the Special Magistrates condense into the specific heads enumerated in the act ; but I have never heard of a charge preferred against a negro for breach of contract for work.

In the way of religious instruction, or indeed instruction of any kind, very little, I may almost say nothing, has been done for the negroes of this extensive and valuable colony. Of protestant establishments, there is but one of the Church of England, and a methodist chapel, both in town. At San Fernando, a village in the district of Naparima, about 30 miles down the coast, a Methodist Missionary is preaching the Gospel, and endeavouring to establish a school, but with indifferent success, and under some persecution. In the intervening country, there is neither school nor chapel, although inhabited principally by persons who profess to be, and call themselves and their negroes, protestants.

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*Extracts from Communications received from Dominica.*

On February 20th, 1835, a written complaint was sent by the manager of the Colibri estate to Mr. Stipendiary-Justice —, charging Augustin with stealing a codfish. *Without seeing Augustin, or hearing any evidence for, or against,* an order was sent to the manager to inflict thirty-nine lashes on the apprentice, and to deprive him of two Saturdays.

On the 4th April, another written complaint was *sent* by the same manager to Mr. Stipendiary-Justice——, charging Ned with insolence. This magistrate also, *without seeing Ned, or hearing any evidence pro or con*, sent an order to the manager to inflict thirty-nine lashes, and to confine him for six days and six nights, during the hours he was not employed in the field.

On the 9th May, another written complaint was *sent* by the same manager to the same Magistrate, charging the same Ned with not cutting canes properly, and with being a notoriously bad character. The Magistrate, *without seeing Ned, or hearing any evidence for or against*, sent an order for thirty-nine lashes, and for depriving the apprentice of two Saturdays. The manager received the order, but fortunately for poor Ned, before it was carried into effect, an anonymous letter appeared, charging the Magistrates with this mockery of justice. Mr. Stipendiary—— immediately hastened to the estate, and rescinded the order.

July 10th.—Alphonse and Richard, were this day charged before Mr. Stipendiary——, by their master, Mr. Adam Paterson, with having been drunk. The two apprentices denied the charge, and offered to produce witnesses on their behalf. The Magistrate told them he could not believe them or their witnesses in opposition to Mr. Paterson; the proposed witnesses were not summoned; and the two apprentices, *on the single deposition of their accuser*, received, the one, thirty-nine, the other, twenty lashes.

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*Extracts from Communications received from Demerara.*

Mr. ——, writing to a relation of his, in September last, says—"You may judge how they (the negroes) are situated, when a man possessed of large fortune, a man who can lay his grievances open—a man who dares to speak his mind, and write it too,—when he cannot obtain justice!! what has an unfortunate negro to expect? I have never heard of such unjust punishments as have been inflicted by Magistrates—magistrates sent out from England—magistrates appointed to see justice done to them, as from August, 1834, to August, 1835."

It is perhaps unnecessary here to extract more largely from documents in possession of the Committee; but a copy of one letter is added, which will serve to show what the feelings and expectations of the planters are, with respect to the duties to be performed by the Special Magistrates; and it may be presumed, that such a letter would not have been written, had not the conduct of these Magistrates, in general, been such, as to induce the expectation, that the request contained therein would be complied with. The letter is as follows:—

"On Friday here, the negroes, contrary to the head man's orders, previous to working the time due, before sundown left the field. The authority of the head people is destroyed; and

unless the lash is applied, I see nothing but insubordination and rebellion.

"Lord Chesterfield said to his son, *The graces, the graces, the graces!* Now those who know the negro, will say, *The cat! the cat!! the cat!!!*

"If you will make an example with the above, I shall be glad to see you as soon as convenient. I should *not like your saying any thing about the hours of labour*, but leave that to the negroes and myself: any further interference will disturb their confused understanding.

"If we had that brave and most excellent soldier Picton here, with the reins in his hand, he would hang some of the black scoundrels of St. Thomas in the Vale. Proclamations and *talk* won't do for Quashee. *Unless you come with a determination to flog, do not come officially.*

"When one has to do with a stubborn animal, who will not believe, who will not listen to reason, why then he *must be flogged*, unless you wish to spoil him.

"I wish you had the command of a good ship, and that you would ship three sturdy Magistrates (not of the class of *les amis de noirs*) accompanied by three boatswains six feet high, forty-five inches across the chest, and quids of tobacco as large as eggs in their cheeks, to start our black savages with rope's end. It would do both their morals and their understandings a great deal of good."

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Extracts sufficient have now been given, to show the enormous evils the negroes suffer under the apprenticeship system, and to prove, that it is the duty of every good man to exert himself to the utmost, to procure an alteration in the system, under which, such cruelties are daily practised with the most unblushing effrontery. Well may such letters as the following be constantly poured in upon the Anti-Slavery Committees. The following has been received from a Jamaica Magistrate since these sheets have been in the press:—

"I now forward a few cases, out of the many atrocious acts brought before me, during a short part of the time that I administered justice in — parish, from which you can make any extracts that may be necessary, to stimulate the many to exertion, who imagine they have done all that is requisite for the long-suffering and still hourly injured negro. *Let the abolitionists but know, that their work is only in part accomplished.* To stop now, would be, to sanction the numerous acts of oppression and injustice the poor apprentices are doomed to undergo, and that too, be it understood, for a longer period than the law contemplates; as the Busha magistrates (that is, those in the interest of the planters) can condemn (and it is too frequently done) the



apprentices to make up any lost time to their masters, *even beyond and after* the first of August, 1840, under that vile clause of the Abolition Act, by which the master escapes justice, although the apprentice is amenable to all its severity. So that the old law is carried *prospectively* into the new, against the apprentice."

Another letter, only just received from Berbice, written by a gentleman who has been long resident there, concludes thus: "It appears to me, that the great object is, to get all they can from the blood and muscles of these poor people during the years of apprenticeship. Do exert yourself to get rid of the apprenticeship system: if it continues, these poor people will be so emaciated with stripes and hard labour, that they will be worth nothing."

It is now, however, time to turn our attention to the character and conduct which these greatly oppressed people have maintained, under all the cruelties and hardships, which are so frequently inflicted upon them, notwithstanding the enormous sacrifice which has been made, in the hope of procuring for them the blessings of freedom.

#### IV.—EXTRACTS RELATIVE TO THE CONDUCT OF THE NEGROES.

The almost universally good conduct of the apprentices, is so generally known and acknowledged, as to render it scarcely necessary to enter on the subject here, or to give at any considerable length, documents in proof of it.

Their excellent and praiseworthy conduct at the period when the Emancipation act came into operation, was noticed in the postscript to the last number of the "Anti-Slavery Reporter" (No. 112). Since that period, there has been no falling off in this respect: all parties, with the exception of some of the least respectable class of planters of the old school of Slavery, have expressed themselves satisfied with their general conduct. Governors and Lieutenant-governors, Bishops, and the Clergy of all denominations, Military commanders and Civil functionaries, have coincided in adding the testimony of their approbation. This will be sufficiently shown by the few extracts which follow.

JAMAICA.—*Extract of a Dispatch from the Marquis of Sligo, Governor of Jamaica, to Lord Glenelg, dated 21st June, 1835.\**

The following are a few memoranda respecting Jamaica, the result of some consideration and observation, combined with the best information that could be procured:—

1. The quality of the sugar made this year, is *bonâ fide* far

\* See Parliamentary Papers, Sess. 1835, No. 278—281, p. 216, 217.

superior to what has been heretofore made by night work on the majority of estates in this island.

2. There has been by far less stock lost in this year's crop than in that of preceding years, and in many places, it has been taken off by a smaller number.

3. The stock are, generally speaking, in much better condition this year, than they were at the close of any former year's crop, when they have been so weak that many of them have died in consequence.

4. That, the apprentices generally are evidently becoming more reconciled to the system, and work cheerfully for money hire, both night and day, and that they are becoming better behaved every day.

5. That, they may be expected still further to improve, as soon as they begin to feel the natural impetus of education and religion, and as they get rid of the system of deceit which Slavery occasioned, in order to save them from oppression.

6. That several estates will exceed the present crop in the next year, and the majority will equal it.

7. That when this is not the case, it can be traced to sufficient causes, independent of the loss of labour, which of course must have considerable effect, when it is recollected that on many estates the slaves were compelled not only to work day and night as long as nature would allow of it, and in such manner as their bodily endurance would permit, for the six week days, but were often compelled to pot sugar on the Sunday.

8. That a manifest supineness has been exhibited on several plantations, by the fact that the next year's crops are often estimated at much more than the present. I know of several individual instances of persons declining to put in plant canes last year, in consequence of the certainty, by anticipation, which they felt that the crop would not be taken off at all.

9. The returns I send home herewith, will show that the preparations for the next year's crop have not been so entirely neglected as has been asserted.

10. That "the new system" furnished a most admirable excuse for any failures and neglects which may have taken place, and which will not therefore be attributed to their real cause.

11. My conviction is, that in many instances, the opinions of individuals are much more favourable as to future prospects, than they choose to allow, and I offer, in proof of it, the reluctance which has been shown in but too many instances to my getting any information upon the subject.

12. That the overseers in many, I will fearlessly say, very many instances, have not given hearty co-operation to the new law, feeling themselves shorn of all their beams by its operation.

13. That many of the attorneys and managers have been so very loud in their assertions of the failure of the system, that they are now unwilling to admit the errors of their opinions.

The first prophecy was, blood and destruction on the first of August: in this they were wrong. The second, that this scene would take place at Christmas, as it had not taken place in August: in this they were wrong. The third, that the apprentices would not work for wages: in this they were wrong, as I know of no instance where the usual wages were offered, and where they were refused. The fourth was, that this crop could not be taken off: in this they were wrong, as it has been taken off in many places much earlier than usual; and if protracted in others, it has been as much from the weather, and the refusal to give wages in many instances, as from any other cause affecting the success of the new system.

14. Having been driven from all these points, they have now created for themselves a fresh object of terror, namely, the next year's crop. On this point I have had some doubts myself all along, and therefore send the information I have received, in order that judgment may be given by others. I freely confess, that the report is, on the whole, much more favourable than I ever expected.

15. That the manufacture and cultivation of sugar has been conducted on the most antiquated system possible, and has received the least possible assistance from the modern improvements in machinery. The plough is hardly ever used; where adopted this year from necessity, it has answered completely. The cattle mills, which are so general, must be abandoned, as they work so very slowly that they cannot meet the diminished hours of labour of the field gangs.

16. That the ginger, arrow-root, and coffee plantations, are as flourishing as ever they were known to be.

17. That the negroes will improve, because they have done so since the first of August, gradually but certainly, in all parts where severity has not been practised.

18. That they have had very little encouragement from many of the managers.

19. That in the whole of the early part, the number of Special Magistrates was quite insufficient, and this affects them more than might be at first imagined, as they show unlimited confidence in those, (the great majority, I am proud to say) who treat them with true kindness.

20. That they passed their holidays at Christmas in an unusually orderly manner, and that there was, literally speaking, I verily believe, not twenty absentees from their labour on the 29th of December, and that they worked on New-Year's day without a murmur.

21. That there has been as yet no increase of religious instruction or education, and very little of good example. That the crop this year has been taken off without a single instance of resistance, and of a superior quality to that heretofore made.

22. That there has been less stock lost this year than usual.

23. That they have in most instances worked cheerfully, day and night (when allowed to do so by night), for hire, on five days of the week.

24. That they now dig cane holes in many parts of the island at one half-penny per hill, earning a dollar a-day, often digging 160 in a day, when seventy to eighty was their task during Slavery.

25. That several planters reluctantly confess, that more work has been done this year than the last, and that many objections have been made to my comparing this year's work to the last, because it was notorious they did not work at all last year.

26. That the amount of this year's, is not, therefore, to be attributed to the exertions of the last year of slavery, as has been asserted. That every one confesses, that things are going on, though not at all well, much better than they expected.

27. That there has been a singular want of uniformity in the administration of the law, which was not and could not be got over, till after some months' experience of it.

28. That there has been a great variance in their allowances, indulgences, and rates of payment.

29. That many have not been paid at all, but have been persuaded by the managers to give additional labour for their old allowances.

30. That the planters looked upon the Specials with great jealousy; and it was a struggle at first, in many places, to maintain as many of their old rights as possible.

31. That many planters have openly and loudly expressed their conviction, that the plan must be a perfect failure.

32. That many of the managers, though, thank God, not all, still maintain their former habits towards them, as far as the law allows them.

33. That there has been little time for the apprentices to reconcile their feelings to their former oppressors.

When all these things are recollected, and it is seen that under all these disadvantages they have behaved so well, and shown such improvement, may it not naturally be inferred, that they are in a state of progressive amendment?

Thus much for the conduct of the apprentices. What now has been that of the whites? Of some of the managers I cannot speak too highly; but then they have reaped the fruit of their wisdom in the remarkable success which has attended their efforts. A reference to the reports, will show what success has

attended the efforts of some, and how deplorable is the state of some of the properties under the management of others, though enjoying precisely similar advantages.

*On the whole, I come to the conclusion, that the perfect success of the new system during the continuance of the apprenticeship, depends entirely on the conduct of the white people, and that if it fails, on them will rest the entire blame.*

(Signed)

SLIGO.

*Extracts of Letters from Special Magistrates to the Marquis of Sligo.\**

1. *From Samuel Lloyd, Esq., dated Stony Hill, St. Andrew's, July 1st, 1835:—*

It must be evident, from the planters keeping up the same extent of cultivation as formerly, on a diminution of one-fourth of the hours of labour, that the negro population here are doing as much or more work, than was ever before performed in the same given time.

The multiplicity of frivolous complaints immediately after the first of August, have dwindled to nothing. The punishable ones now preferred, are chiefly for petty robbery of the negro grounds, and a neglect on the part of watchmen and cattle-minders: *very few for a want of sufficient labour.* The petty plunder complaints, are almost entirely against persons who have been long absent from the properties to which they belonged, and who came home, under your Lordship's royal proclamation on the first of August, whose provision grounds must have naturally gone to ruin.

2. *From R. Standish Haly, Esq., dated, The Chapelton District of Clarendon, 25th June, 1835:—*

I beg to state, that the disposition and conduct of the negroes are most promising; and will eventually prove beyond doubt, to any who may still remain unconvinced, that the expense occasioned by the new system, is more than covered by the unfrequency of desertion, and the improved state of health and strength enjoyed by the negroes. I never had the management (and I many years, as first lieutenant, directed the discipline of men-of-war) of a people *so docile and ready to obey, more respectful to superiors, and submissive to their direction and advice.* The predominant vices of idleness and petty thefts, are *clearly the offspring of a state, from which they can only be said to be now emerging.* In losing these vices, which are even now going to decay, I trust that they may not substitute European crimes of a deeper hue.

\* See Parliamentary Papers, Sess. 1835, No. 278—281.

I cannot, in making a statement of this nature, refrain from taking the liberty of recalling to your Excellency's recollection, an instance of industry and good conduct upon the part of the apprentices upon Leicesterfield's estate, and in doing so, to assure your Lordship, that upon any estate in this district, where the manager's treatment is kind and considerate, I could not fear producing similar commendable dispositions, if extra labour were required.

3. *From W. H. Alley, Esq., dated Mile Gully, July 1, 1835.*

I have minutely inquired into the disposition, behaviour, and industry of the negro population, and am happy to state, that, on all the large properties, the apprentices are working cheerfully and well.

I have made myself acquainted personally with the negroes, in the absence of their employers, in order to ascertain their feelings towards their masters, and I have invariably found, where a kind and conciliatory mode of treatment has been pursued, that the apprentices are the more willing labourers.

*Extract of a Letter from the Bishop of Jamaica to the Rev. W. Parker, Secretary to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, dated May 27th, 1835.*

At Montego Bay, I witnessed with pleasure the effects of the late Bill for the Abolition of Slavery, in the proper and decorous observance of the sabbath; indeed, this remark is applicable to every part of the island: not only the churches, but, in many instances, the church-yards are literally crowded with apprentices pressing forward to taste of the waters of eternal life.

The duties of the clergy are most arduous. I witnessed, in two cases, the whole of the sabbath employed by them in the diligent instruction of the several classes in their churches, from ten o'clock in the morning to seven in the evening. Nothing can exceed the desire of these poor creatures to benefit by religious instruction.

On the whole, when I reflect on the state of alarm, excitement, and apprehension under which we suffered as the 1st of August drew nigh; and when I consider that, in a population consisting of 330,000 negroes, *only two instances of insubordination* connected with overt acts of violence were occasioned, one in St. Ann's, and another in St. Thomas-in-the-East, I turn with gratitude and thanksgiving to that great Being, who so ordereth the unruly wills and affections of sinful men in the furtherance of his gracious purpose.

BAHAMAS.—A gentleman who has been for many years connected with the West Indies, and long resident in the Bahamas, writes under date of the 29th of August, as follows :—

His Excellency the Lieut-Governor, (Lieut.-Col. Colebrooke) takes a warm and active interest in every thing relating to the negroes ; he is much and constantly occupied with plans for their benefit.

It seemed to me last year, that in the Bahamas we might have at once made the change from slavery to freedom with perfect safety and with much convenience ; but a majority of those who had the power to decide, entertain different views. I should have been glad that our colony had made a trio with Antigua and Bermuda.

ANTIGUA.—In this island, as well as in Bermuda, it is well known, that Slavery was abolished, without substituting in its place the system of apprenticeship ; and that all the negroes are "*free*"—"without restriction and without condition"—and consequently, in this island, all is going on well : the planter and his labourer are both satisfied. As a proof of the good understanding existing between them it may be mentioned, and it is a most important fact, that the labourers throughout the colony are working on the same plantations as when they were slaves—and that the masters have not ejected them from the cottages and gardens allotted to them before this great change was effected. The following is an extract of a letter received from a resident in the Island by the last packet, dated 14th Jan., 1836 :—

The relative interests of this community have been progressively harmonizing towards the happiest results, and month after month produces additional proofs of the wisdom which overstepped the system of apprenticeship. Breaches of contract on plantations are seldom heard of, and the peasantry are steadily and numerously pursuing their wonted occupations, under an increased and increasing knowledge of the value of freedom, induced, however, in a great measure, by forgetfulness of the past, and confidence in the present upright and liberal behaviour of the majority of their employers. Our last crop commenced under much dubious feeling on both sides with respect to the extent of labour on the one hand, and the extent of remuneration on the other ; but that consideration being succeeded by mutual good faith, the present crop is approaching without a shadow of distrust ; and it is generally admitted that we have fairly entered upon that crisis by which we may judge of the superiority of unrestricted freedom, over the system of apprenticed labour pursuing elsewhere.

BERMUDA.—It is highly gratifying to find, on the best authority, that in Bermuda the lately emancipated class have conducted themselves with such propriety as to merit the public testimony of the legislature to that effect. The Hon. H. G. Hunt (acting Governor and Commander-in-Chief), on opening the new Sessions of the Colonial Parliament, in his address to the Council and Assembly, said,—

“It affords me much gratification to be able to state, that the great measure of granting unqualified emancipation to the slaves, which engaged the attention of the Legislature during its late Session, has been followed by no interruption of the public tranquillity. Since the Abolition of Slavery, there has been no perceptible increase either of crime or vagrancy in this community, and I confidently hope, that the liberal course so unanimously adopted by the Legislature of Bermuda will tend to the general prosperity of the colony.”

The Legislative Council replied to this part of his Honour's address in the following satisfactory language:—

“We rejoice to find that the act of the last Sessions of the Legislature, which conceded the *unqualified* Abolition of Slavery to the unanimous wishes of the community, has resulted in an *improved state of public tranquillity*; and we confidently trust that the means of instruction, and stimulants to industry, which have been already afforded, and, probably, will be increased to the coloured population of these islands, may ultimately produce all the benefits which were contemplated by the great measure of emancipation.”

The House of Assembly also bore testimony to the correctness of his Honour's observations. In their reply they say,—

“We feel equally gratified with you, in observing that the great measure for the Abolition of Slavery, and the extension of *equal rights to all the inhabitants* of the colony, which engaged our attention during the last Session of our Legislature, has been followed by so little of the evil which has been apprehended, even by some of its most ardent advocates.”

*Barbadoes “West Indian,”*

8th June, 1835.

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The Committee could add very largely to these extracts from the official reports of the Stipendiary Magistrates, and from other sources, but suffice it to say, that they almost all concur in stating,—that the apprentices show much greater attention to the religious observances of the Sabbath than formerly;—that they are very desirous of receiving moral and religious instruction, especially for their children;—that they work faithfully and well;—that they



work not only readily and cheerfully for moderate wages, but will devote to extra labour, those hours which are generally given to sleep or recreation;—that crime is daily decreasing;—and that they are loyal and affectionate towards the British Government, and particularly so, towards the King.

Yet, these are the men, whom many of the planters affirm, are to be governed by means only of the whip, dungeons, and chains!!!

In a former part of this pamphlet, the Committee congratulated the friends of the negroes, on the measures for improving their condition, which were recommended by government to the colonial legislatures for their adoption. How little these recommendations have been attended to, will be shown by the following extracts from the Jamaica newspapers, which have arrived since these sheets were sent to press:—

“The two most important measures brought under the consideration of the Assembly, by the executive, have gone through, or will have gone through all their stages, ere this paper is published. We should have felt pleasure in saying they are likely to prove satisfactory to that functionary, and to the parent Government. Such a hope cannot now be entertained, and it remains to be seen, what will be the consequence of the determination which the House of Assembly has come to.

“With regard to the first, the Police Bill has been passed for one year only, and certain restrictions have been laid by this act on the apprentices, to which they were not previously subject. The right of bringing a bundle of wood or grass to market on their own account, has been denied, or very considerably restricted. The restriction will bear extremely hard upon these people, many of whom are allowed by their masters the right of cutting wood on their lands in lieu of allowance, and it is doubtful, whether it does not come within the meaning, or is not one of those measures, affecting the rights of apprentice and master, to which his Excellency cannot give his assent, without a suspending clause. This attempt to deprive the apprentice of a right hitherto enjoyed, of placing him in a worse condition than he was in as a Slave, is, we maintain, of itself, sufficient to render it imperative on the executive to withhold his assent from the Police act. Besides sugar, coffee, pimento, and other produce, and wood and grass, the apprentice is precluded from taking to market, the canes grown by him in his own garden or grounds, without a ticket from his master. This enactment amounts to a prohibition of the apprentice growing canes, unless with the concurrence of his master. The authority of the Special Magistrate is here set aside most completely, and Quashee brought under the control of the local Magistrate, for the heinous offence of bringing a bundle of wood or grass, worth 5*d.* or 10*d.* to town, for sale, or half a dozen canes, grown by himself in his

own garden. This kind of legislation is, doubtless, considered very proper by some of our wiseacres. Fortunately, there are others to be consulted—the British Government and people, who, it appears, paid, or agreed to pay, twenty millions to put the negroes into a much worse condition than that in which they previously were.—The specimen of enlightened legislation alluded to, is, to use Mr. Leslie's favourite mode of expression, quite refreshing. It will prove to the philanthropists of Great Britain, the absolute necessity of putting an end to a state of probation, which is daily becoming more irksome and oppressive, than the late one of Slavery, and to the Government, the propriety of narrowly scrutinizing every enactment, emanating from the legislature of this colony.

“The other measure is, the first Act in aid of the Abolition Act, which expires at the end of the year. With reference to this enactment, his Excellency expressed a hope, that the House would deem it advisable to pass it in its present form, without intermixing any new matter, or any, which has been provided for, by the act lately disallowed. Now, what has the House done? it has introduced into it some of the very matter which had been provided for by the disallowed act, and also altered the Bill, by giving to the Special Justice, *full costs*, instead of *treble costs*. And all this has been done, in order to show, that the Assembly is independent, and can do as it pleases.”

*Jamaica Watchman, Saturday, Dec. 12, 1835.*

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In submitting the preceding statements to the consideration of their friends and the public, the Committee have endeavoured to give a fair sample of the nature of the communications which they have received. It will be observed, that a large portion of them are supported by official documents, arising out of legal proceedings; and the Committee take this opportunity to state, that not a single case has been put forth, which has not been communicated to them on the most respectable authority. The reasons why the names of many individuals implicated in these statements are omitted, must be too obvious to require explanation. Some of the details in possession of the Committee are of too immoral and disgusting a nature to be laid before the public in print, but the Committee feel convinced, that those contained in the preceding pages cannot be read by any one possessed of a common share of sense and humanity, without producing a conviction of the necessity of immediate measures being adopted, to carry into their fullest operation the beneficent designs of the Imperial Abolition Act, and to secure the future and permanent welfare of the negroes.

These communications also prove, that justice and humanity alike require, that the friends of the negro race should continue to watch with jealous care the conduct of the Colonial legislatures and governments, in every measure they may adopt with regard to the negroes, in order to prevent their engrafting (as they have already but too frequently done,) enactments tending to re-introduce slavery *de facto*, on the very laws ostensibly adopted for its extermination; and from enforcing, as they have also done, those iniquitous enactments, by means of the identical machinery established by the British Parliament, for giving effect to the freedom it granted.

When it becomes generally known, that such has been the conduct pursued in the colonies, and that such evils as have been detailed in the foregoing pages still exist, the Committee are persuaded, that the British people will again exert that vast moral power, with which, two years ago, they demanded, with a force which could not be resisted,—the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British dominions; and which cannot fail to be equally potent, when it shall declare, that they will no longer allow the fruits of the victory they then so gloriously achieved, to be wrested from their hands, by those, whose acquiescence they purchased, at an expense of twenty millions sterling! But the Committee must remind their friends, that to produce such an effect, *combined exertion is necessary*; the measures proper to be adopted, in order to obtain it, will no doubt readily suggest themselves to the members of the Anti-Slavery Committees, but it must be borne in mind, that not one single day can be passed idly by, in the prosecution of this great work, without the risk of injury to its final triumph. Mr. Buxton on the very first day of the session gave notice, that on the 22nd of March he should move for “a Committee to inquire into the working of the apprenticeship system in the colonies—into the condition of the apprentices,—and into the Laws and Regulations affecting them which have been passed.” But if on that day it should be perceived, that he is not effectually supported by the general voice of the country, far better would it have been for the negroes, if their friends in the Colonies had witnessed their sufferings without reporting them to this country:—far better would it have been, that such reports, if made, had been received in silence, than, that having been received and made public, the British nation should have heard them without adopting instant and efficient measures for protecting them for the future, against such enormous evils; for if the friends of the negro race are not supported, and supported very powerfully too in Parliament, in the measures they may bring forward in their behalf—their task-masters will believe, that British philanthropists have deserted the cause of their sable

brethren, and left them to the full operation of unjust laws and cruel treatment, and they will triumphantly return to their old courses, and proceed with impunity, to load them with chains;—to rivet on the iron neck-collars;—to immure them in dungeons;—to lacerate them with the cat;—and to flog gravid women on their treadmills; in the full conviction, that the future cries of their victims will cease to raise sympathy in British bosoms.

To render the commission of such crimes impossible, the Committee urge every individual who would shrink from being a guilty participator in them, instantly to adopt every constitutional means within his power, to procure support to those measures which may be brought forward in Parliament, for the benefit of the negro population of our colonies; for they are convinced, that it is by such means only that the continuation of the evils related in the preceding pages, are to be finally put down; and that a system of order, humanity, and justice, can be established in their place.

*Office of the London Anti-Slavery Society,  
18, Aldermanbury, 1st March, 1836.*